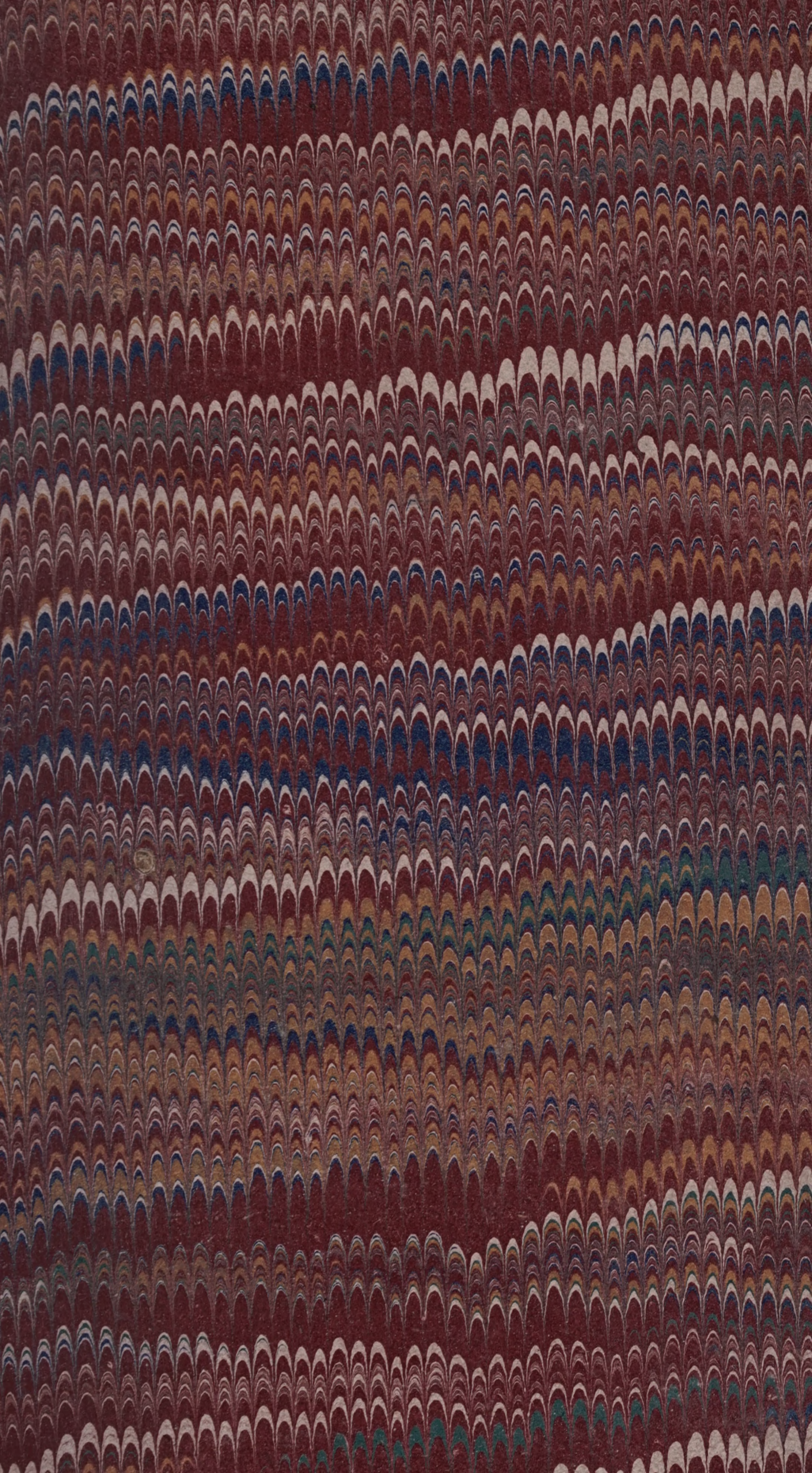
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. ..... Copyright No. .....

PZ 3
Shelf C3905

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



THE MORVILLE SERIES.

THE CHÂTEAU MORVILLE;

OR,

LIFE IN TOURAINE.

5313.C1

THE

Château Morville;

OR,

LIFE IN TOURAINE.

FROM THE FRENCH.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
COPYRIGHT
No. 5313
WASHINGTON D.C.

BY E. R.

Translator only.

PHILADELPHIA:
CLAXTON, REMSEN & HAFFELFINGER.
1872.

PZ3
.C3905

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1872, by

CLAXTON, REMSEN & HAFFELFINGER,

In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

KING & BAIRD, PRINTERS AND STEREOTYPERS,

607 & 609 SANSOM STREET, PHILADA.

PREFACE.

THIS volume is the first of a contemplated series of

Entertaining Foreign Fiction,

to consist of a selection of some of the best works of the most popular Continental authors.

It is intended especially for that class of readers who, while desirous of enjoying all the instruction and amusement to be derived from a first-class novel, do not wish, by indiscriminate reading, to run the risk of having their modesty offended, their common sense outraged, or their moral feelings shocked.

The first duty of a Translator of works of fiction is, undoubtedly, to give a faithful version of his subject—not of course by slavishly rendering the original word for word—but by employing, if possible, the very same expressions the authors themselves would have preferred, if they had been writing in his language.

His second duty is to have a proper regard for the honest prejudices of his readers, their instinctive sympathies, their knowledge of life, founded on observation and experience, and above all for their conscientious moral convictions.

Therefore, besides offering them only works of real excellence, he should never hesitate to make, even in such works, all those minor changes, omissions, additions, and other improvements that he may deem indispensably necessary for securing two very essential objects:

1. To preserve all through that air of *vraisemblance* or *perfect reality* which every work of fiction should possess, but in which foreign writers are peculiarly liable to fail when treating of names, places and minor events in countries with which they cannot be familiar.

2. To show the highest possible respect for the delicate moral sense of conscientious readers, not by affected and foolish prudery, but by carefully avoiding whatever might be construed into a coarse allusion, an unbecoming expression, or a profane levity.

With these precautions, the translation of some Continental novels ought to become a valuable addition to our present English stock, in which, notwithstanding its enormous dimensions, there is still left plenty of room for good ones.

What is the best proof of the goodness of a novel? What is the best test of the goodness of exciting amusement of *any* kind? Unquestionably, its after effects. "By their fruits, ye shall know them." If, after the perusal of a novel—no matter of how powerful, entertaining, absorbing, or stimulating a nature—we find ourselves unhappy, restless, craving after excitement, disposed to shirk our duties, doubting God's watchful Providence—then that novel is *bad*—we have been drinking poisoned champagne!

Judged by this test, a large number of the *Jane Eyre* style of English novels must be condemned as decidedly unhealthy.

Many French and German novels, are still more objectionable. Their vivacity, wit, and grace of style—in which the former especially far surpass the often slipshod English school—their dramatic power, their intimate knowledge of their own world, their naturalness, their curious "morality," even their exaggerated refinement of high toned "honor," render them only doubly dangerous, and in the eye of an anxious parent doubly detestable.

Still, even the most spoiled and petted favorites of the Continental public seem to yield occasionally to the consciousness of better instincts. In the midst of a polluted stream of productions in which every obligation, human and divine, seems com-

pletely ignored, there turns up, every now and then, a work of unequivocal merit, a truthful and refreshing sketch of interesting life and manners, an almost faultless gem, which, in the hands of a conscientious and judicious translator, could be rendered—even if at the expense of some of its original brilliancy—completely free from all offensive blemish.

Such works are by no means rare in Continental Literature, and it is of them that the present volume is now presented to the American Public, as a specimen. The "CHÂTEAU MORVILLE" does not pretend to be the best of its class, but by its liveliness, freshness, heartiness, freedom from crime, the honesty and simplicity of its story, the general healthiness of its tone—not to mention the excellent lessons it gives to parents—it strongly recommends itself as a *good average sample.*

It is for the Public to determine how soon the other volumes of the *Morville Series* are to appear.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

THE ARRIVAL.

Chapter.		Page.
I.	THE DILIGENCE OFFICE,	9
II.	THE PARENTS,	33
III.	THE PUPIL,	49
IV.	THE RICH UNCLE,	59
V.	THE DEBATE,	73
VI.	THE GOVERNESS,	90
VII.	A DOUBTFUL FRIEND; AND A DECIDED ENEMY,	104
VIII.	FIRST EXPERIENCES AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS,	120

PART II.

LIFE AT THE CHÂTEAU.

Chapter.		Page.
I.	SORCERY. CORRESPONDENCE,	133
II.	A SECRET SUFFERER—AN EVENING LESSON,	157
III.	EVERY DAY LIFE,	177
IV.	THE FÊTE,	194
V.	A NEW PUPIL,	216
VI.	THE SUITOR,	228

PART III.

COMPLICATIONS.

Chapter.		Page.
I.	THE PAVILION OF THE ROCKS,	241
II.	MADAME PIVOLET,	252
III.	BROTHER AND SISTER,	265
IV.	THÉODORE DE FAVROLLE,	281
V.	JOHN WELSH,	289
VI.	MONSIEUR DE MORVILLE,	302
VII.	MADAME DE MORVILLE. PIVOLET EXPLODES HER CATASTROPHE,	311
VIII.	THE LION BEARDED IN HIS DEN,	323
IX.	MORE VISITORS AT THE DEN,	338
X.	ALPHONSINE,	346
XI.	ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL,	356

PART I.

THE ARRIVAL.

CHAPTER I.

THE DILIGENCE OFFICE.

In the year 1840, towards the beginning of September, long before the time of railroads in that part of France, several travellers assembled in the Diligence Office at Calais, were waiting for the hour of starting for Paris.

A young lady, over twenty years of age, with a face remarkably pretty, full of distinction and of an expression at once sweet, timid and melancholy, was seated in a corner of the room, a carpet bag in her lap, and a little leather travelling trunk at her feet. She wore a straw bonnet trimmed with pink and by no means concealing the silky locks of her light chestnut hair, and she was wrapped up in an ample shawl of Scotch plaid.

Two young gentlemen, very good looking, elegantly dressed, wearing caps and holding valise in hand, stood near our young traveller, talking in a low voice, and from their glances, fuller of admiration than respect, evidently making her the subject of their conversation. This must have been of a very lively nature, to judge from their frequent smiles and bursts of laughter, which, however, they took some pains to suppress. Near them stood a man about fifty years of age, but still strong and hearty. His face closely shaved, except two little whiskers where the gray al-

most effaced the red, his white cravat tied with a large knot, his long red-striped waistcoat, his black short coat, his drab breeches and gaiters of the same color, his walking stick, the scrupulous neatness of his garments, all gave him the externals of an English coachman, belonging to a respectable family, when he has quitted his livery. He understood French, for at one of the free and easy remarks of the young men, he turned round, colored, and cast his eyes on our young traveller, who was so evidently the object of their allusions. Just then they quitted the office, and one said to the other, smiling:

"Well, now, I think that rather conceited."

"Poh! She's good looking enough, but I'm sure she's only a chambermaid, going to seek her fortune in Paris."

"No matter, I'm certain of winning the bet."

"And so am I."

They went away.

The young girl, dejected and thoughtful, had paid no attention to the remarks of the young men; she was awakened from her reverie by an exclamation from the man with the short coat and drab gaiters, who, approaching her with the expression of one who cannot believe his eyes, cried out in English:

"God bless us and save us! is it you, Miss Mary?"

And he took off his hat with an air of the most profound respect.

"John Welsh!" said the young girl, no less surprised. "You here, John! I thought you were in Paris," and she shook his hand most cordially.

"I'm just come from there, Miss Mary. But is all the family here with you in France?"

"No, John. My father, mother and sisters are in Dublin. I'm going to Paris all alone."

"You're going to Paris all alone—you! Miss Mary!"

John looked at her with increasing wonder and uneasiness.

A little smile hovered on her lips, and she replied:

"My dear John, I can speak to you in the fullest confidence. You have been one of the oldest and most faithful servants in our family. You have known me when a child."

"Indeed have I, Miss Mary. You were a dawney little creature, hardly three years old, when I led you around the paddock on old Sawney, the Shetland pony's back, while your father, Squire O'Connor, held you on the saddle."

"Well, John, my father has been completely ruined by a series of misfortunes, but more particularly by the failure of a friend, for whom he was bound, to meet his engagement. Clara Cottage, Ballykile, and everything else has been sold. My father paid every demand to his very last shilling, and he has now no means of supporting himself and the family, except a poor clerkship which a friend obtained for him in the Bank of Ireland, Dublin. I have come to this country to be a governess. I have been so fortunate as to obtain this situation through the good offices of the Consul of France, whom my father had intimately known in happier days."

"Good Heavens! what do you say, Miss Mary?" exclaimed John, wringing his hands and wiping his eyes. "Your father, Squire O'Connor, ruined, Clara Cottage sold, Ballykile gone! Poor old Faugh-a-

ballagh, his favorite hunter, and Black Hawk, the darlinest bit of thorough-bred in the country, that I raised and trained for your own dear self, Miss Mary —all sold! The Lord be good to us!—And the carriage horses, and the farm horses, and the Durham cows, and the Southdowns, and the fat pigs, and the hare-hounds—all sold! The cross of Christ around us, I can't believe it. Squire O'Connor ruined, one of the richest gentlemen farmers in the county Kilkenny! Oh! Miss Mary, say it's not true! Sure you were always so fond of joking," and the poor fellow strove to smile in his tears.

"It is too true, John. I could hardly believe it myself at first, no more than you; but, courage and resignation came at last."

"And you have to travel alone, my darling Miss Mary? Is it possible? All alone in this strange country, without even a chambermaid?"

"My mother and my sisters are their own chambermaids now: I must be mine, John.—But, I thought you were settled in Paris."

"Oh! Miss Mary, I could not have better luck for not following the Squire's advice. Sorry I am for leaving his service, even if the legacy that came to me from America was twice as big. Hard fortune on the day I ever left Ireland to go to Paris with my uncle Toby to deal in Irish horses. Those French are not like our own people, and luck was against us anyhow. Our speculation failed completely. I'm as poor a man now as ever I was. I'm quitting France forever; and do you know where I was facing when I met you? Why, straight back to Clara Cottage—no less, to enter the Squire's service once more,

and never to leave it again, with the blessing of God. I'll never forget his last words to me, as he walked along with us down the avenue. Och! 'tis he was the kind master; not a bit of pride about him no more than about yourself, Miss Mary.—'John,' says he, 'you're too honest a man to be a horse-dealer. Mind this—you'll be cheated out of all your little legacy. But as you have been a faithful servant, I may say a true friend, here for more than twenty years, never forget that the doors of Clara Cottage are always open to you, and no one shall be ever there more welcome than you.' And he took my hand, Miss Mary, and shook it like a brother's. And to think if I went there now I should only see cold, strange faces; not even a dog would know me. Miss Mary, the sight of the desolation would break my heart!"

"Don't be uneasy, John. An honest, intelligent man like you can find a good situation readily."

"Oh! Miss Mary, that is not what troubles me. It is your long journey from here to Paris in a coach, where you will be all alone,—you that never quitted your mother's side."

"I have told you already, John, that courage as well as resignation came with our misfortunes."

"Oh! Miss Mary, if I had only money enough to pay my fare to Paris, I would ask your permission to accompany you to your destination. In Paris I could easily get a situation as groom or stable boy, and so earn enough to take me back to Ireland."

"John, you're a kind and worthy man. I am very much touched with your devotion. I thank you with all my heart."

"Out of the three hundred pounds of my American legacy, I have only thirty shillings left, which will hardly take me to London, where, however, I have plenty of friends. I wish I could go along with you, Miss Mary."

"You see, John, it is quite impossible. My purse is hardly bigger than yours, and I have to go to Touraine, far beyond Paris."

"Oh! murder, Miss Mary, how can I leave you here all alone? If I had only the satisfaction of telling Squire O'Connor that I had seen you landed safe and sound in the house you're going to! But," exclaimed the poor fellow still more sorrowfully, "misfortune never comes alone!—And the Captain, Miss Mary, you have not said a word about Captain O'Reilly."

The young girl blushed, and suppressed a sigh: her sweet face showed much inward pain as she said in a broken voice:—

"Oh! Captain O'Reilly is to return from the East Indies in two years. We heard from him lately; he is in great danger, for the Afghans are terrible enemies."

"Never fear him, Miss Mary. He's sure to come back safe to old Ireland, perhaps even before the two years. And then every one knows the first thing he'll do will be to marry his own sweet Miss Mary, that's promised to him ever so long ago. Won't I be the happy man on the day of the wedding!"

"That wedding can never take place, John. I am now too poor and too proud to think of marrying Captain O'Reilly."

Then, feeling the subject of conversation to be too painful, the young girl stopped a moment,

wiped a tear from her eyes, and resumed in a calmer voice:

"I am very happy indeed to have met you, John. If you go to Dublin you can tell the family that you found me well and in good spirits at the moment of my departure from Calais."

"Ah! Miss Mary, to travel thus all alone—that's what terrifies me."

"Why so? There's nothing terrible in the journey. I'm alone, it is true, but so have I been all the way from Dublin, and I have found little reason to complain of my companions."

"Oh! in England, yes; for people there are accustomed to see young ladies travel alone, every day."

"Of course, and I have always heard that in France nothing is more respected than a lone, unprotected woman."

"Ah! Miss Mary," cried John, sighing and thinking of the talk and the wager of the two young men, "if you only knew—I don't understand French very well, but I know it well enough to understand certain things."

"What do you mean, John?"

At this moment, and while Miss Mary and the old servant continued their conversation in a low voice at the further end of the hall, a new traveller entered, noisily, out of breath, jostling every one out of his way, and abusing a porter for his laziness, though the poor creature was on the point of dropping under the weight of a trunk, two carpet bags, a hat-box, and four or five great brown paper parcels, which it was a miracle for one man to con-

trive to carry at all. The new comer was stout and short, of sixty, or thereabouts, with a face so snappish and crabbed in its character that its expression bordered on the ridiculous. He was closely followed by four young men, much less elegantly dressed than the two already spoken of, whose jokes had so irritated honest John Welsh. They had all just come from a copious breakfast, and the brightness of their cheeks, the sparkling of their eyes, the hysterical character of their voices, their frequent bursts of loud laughter, as well as certain swaying, involuntary motions of their bodies, testified pretty plainly that they were rather tipsy.

"What a pity my jolly tars," exclaimed one of them, "that we must be separated from here to Paris, two of us being in the *interior** and two in the *rotonde** of the diligence."

"My resources do not permit me the luxury of a seat in the *interior*," replied another. "I open a national subscription to engineer a tunnel from the *rotonde* to the *interior*, so that we can discuss matters at our ease during the journey."

"Hurrah for the grand national subscription to demolish the *interior!*" cried his companions: "carried unanimously!"

"Hey, fellows!" cried another of the crowd in a low voice, "twig this old cove! Admire his furred boots! and, good Lord! what a sweet, sweet, face!"

"What fun it would be for Tournaquin and me if we could only have him along with us in the *interior!*"

"There's no exhausting such a face as that!"

"A source of endless amusement."

*The front and back parts of the vehicle.

"I open a national subscription to *haze* him at every *table d'hôte* along the road. He's just the customer to like it."

"Yes, old boy, come along with us if you're up for fun. We're the fellows that'll put you through."

In the meantime the old gentleman approached the office, and in a loud voice now opened a conversation with the clerk, to which our four gay young friends listened with an increasing interest.

"I sent a servant from my hotel an hour ago to engage a place for me."

"For what destination, sir?"

"What destination! *Parbleu*—for Botardière, of course."

"I don't know where Botardière is, sir."

"How, sir!" exclaimed the old gentleman, wroth at the clerk's geographical ignorance. "That's a pretty thing to acknowledge. Botardière, sir, is at Botardière, as Paris is at Paris. I repeat it, sir, an hour ago a servant came from my hotel to engage a place for me in the diligence that is about to start for Paris, whence I shall take the Tours diligence to get to Botardière."

The word Botardière seemed to take the fancy of the four young men, for every time it was repeated they greeted it with such plaudits and laughter that at last the old gentleman turned round at them, fearfully knitting his eyebrows. With one accord, they immediately gave him the military salute with great solemnity, smiling at him with much graciousness. He immediately turned back to the clerk, grumbling and muttering and hardly able to contain his rage.

The latter, having consulted his book, observed:—

"Yes, sir, it is true; an hour ago I received earnest for the sixth place, the only one remaining in the *interior*."

"How! shall I not have the right hand corner in the back seat?—I protest I shall take no other."

"Impossible, sir, there is only one left, and that is the sixth."

"What? the place on the front seat, with my back to the horses? Do you think I'm a fool?"

"Well, sir, you are not obliged to go at all: but, of course, you forfeit the earnest."

"What extortion! a regular swindle! such treatment of travellers! But stop—are there any women in the carriage?"

"One lady, only."

"Better and better! That crowns the joke! When she's cold, up with the windows! When she's warm, down with them! At table she's to be helped first, and with the best bits, too! Every nonsensical whim of hers to be humored. Then we're told not to go at all. We're only to lose our earnest. What kindness! What kind of a den have I got into! Nice journey! Delightful beginning! Brilliant prospect!—Without at all taking into consideration the pleasure of having to put up with all sorts of company, and God knows," added the irascible old gentleman, flinging a side glance at the four young men who were watching him as a cat watches a mouse, "God knows the kind of companions one is exposed to now-a-days in a public conveyance."

"Sir, will you take the place, yes or no?"

"I *will* take it, sir. Must I not get to Botar-

dière? Yes, sir, I will take it since I'm forced to it, with the dagger to my throat, under pain of losing my earnest. But, sir, I take it under protest. And I also hope, sir, that some one of my companions will be well bred enough, respectful enough, to a man of my years, not to allow me with my gray hairs to travel in a public conveyance with my back to the horses."

"Arrange that as you please, sir, with the other travellers. Your name, if you please?"

"Edward Joseph De Botardière, proprietor of the château Botardière, commune of Botardière."

Scarcely had the old gentleman given his name and residence, which he did in a very pompous manner, when the four merry youths, who, thanks to his loud angry voice, had not lost a word of the conversation, again burst into a general cachinnation, which they pretended they almost choked themselves in trying to suppress; but the proprietor of the château Botardière scowled at them with a withering glance, paid his fare, and stalked majestically away.

"Edward Joseph is superb," cried one.—"I don't want to lose the pleasure of Edward Joseph's company. It will be a delicious treat."

"I open a national subscription to pin a paper tail to Edward Joseph's coat."

"I'll take a thousand shares if you print Botardière on it in large legible letters."

And out they started, arm in arm, sliding on their toes, swinging their bodies and chanting by way of chorus:

"Good, good, good, for Botardière!
Good, good, good, for Botardière!"

Those mad fellows had hardly disappeared when our two acquaintances of the wager returned to the office.

During the preceding scene, Miss Mary, seeing with what kind of companions she was to travel to Paris, had held an earnest conversation in a low voice with John Welsh. She grew more and more saddened and distressed; but all at once she seemed to take a decisive resolution, though sorely against her will, and she slowly approached the young man whose remarks had excited John's anger.

In spite of his levity, so apparent from the nature of his remarks regarding a poor unprotected stranger, this young gentleman, as well as his friend, seemed to belong to the best society; his countenance was very agreeable and his appearance most distinguished. Addressing him then in excellent French, Miss Mary said, with a mixture of embarrassment, sweetness, and dignity that gave a most touching expression to her beautiful face:

"Sir, will you have the kindness to grant me one moment's conversation?"

The young man, very much surprised and still more delighted at such a proposal, cast his friend a triumphant glance; then, bowing low to the young girl, he followed her a few steps to a window where John was standing.

The young gentleman was at first rather disconcerted at seeing a third party take share in his conversation with the pretty stranger, and particularly a third party wearing a coachman's gaiters. But on reflecting that the young Englishwoman was only a chambermaid seeking her fortune, he thought it but

natural after all that she should be under the protection, as it were, of the man with the gaiters. However, bowing again to Miss Mary, he said:

"Madam, I am only too happy to place myself under your orders."

"Sir, I have not the honor of being known to you—but, relying on French generosity, I come to demand a favor of you, sir—a very great favor."

"Madam, dispose of me," replied the young man, who began to remark that, for a chambermaid, the young *Miss* expressed herself admirably well in French, and with remarkable elegance, too.

"Sir," resumed Mary, "I am an Irishwoman. Reverses of fortune have befallen my family, among whom this worthy and excellent servant," pointing to John, "has lived for twenty years, and have placed me under the necessity of accepting in France the situation of governess. I am going to Paris, alone, in a public conveyance. This long journey would not disquiet me in the least, if all the gentlemen destined to be my companions were as well bred as I doubt not you are, sir; but, unfortunately, people are too often met with who never suspect how painful, and consequently how worthy of respectful treatment, is the position of a young girl quitting for the first time her father's house, and obliged to travel alone in a foreign land."

"Mademoiselle," said the reckless young man, more and more surprised and confused, "I don't suppose that a man exists miserable enough to be wanting in respect towards you."

"I know, sir, that a woman can in the end always succeed in making herself respected by no matter

whom; but such an extreme is so humiliating, so cruel to a well constituted heart, that I should be sorry to see myself reduced to it. Accordingly, sir, I address myself to you, though the service I expect from your honor and loyalty must no doubt appear rather singular."

"Only speak, Mademoiselle," replied the young man, completely subdued by the touching dignity of her words, "I will be too happy to render you any service in my power, no matter what."

"There are to be six of us in the carriage in which we are going to travel; I am the only woman. Permit me, sir, to pass for your sister till we get to Paris. I speak French well enough to render this pretended relationship not improbable. Consent to this, sir, be generous, and I declare to you with our old Irish frankness that I shall be eternally grateful for your kindness. This faithful servant, in whose presence I make the request, shall then be able to tell my father and mother that my journey in France has commenced prosperously."

There was in this language, in this slightly foreign accent, which gave it a new charm, something so ingenuous, so loyal, that the young man, affected, deeply touched by this appeal made to his heart, reproaching himself most sincerely with the previous lightness, not to say dishonor, of his conduct, replied to Miss Mary, in a respectful and feeling tone:

"I am too much flattered, Mademoiselle, by the confidence with which you deign to honor me not to try to make myself worthy of it. I promise to act the part of your brother as well as I possibly can until our arrival at Paris."

From the emotion so visible on the features of the young man, Miss Mary could not but believe him sincere. She replied then with an expression of touching gratitude :

" Sir, if you have your mother still living, if you have a sister, tell them on your return what you have done to-day for a stranger. They will love you the more for it."

And Miss Mary, with that cordial frankness which forms such a striking feature of the Irish character, presented to the young man her little gloved hand, saying, " Thank you, sir, thank you. Miss O'Connor believes in your word."

" And Miss O'Connor," replied the young man, slightly touching with his lips the hand of the foreigner, " may rest fully assured that Théodore de Favrolle has never broken his promise."

" Oh ! thank you my good gentleman, and may God bless you," cried John, in his queer French, greatly affected by the scene.

" Gentlemen and ladies, prepare to get aboard," said one of the employés.

" My good kind John," said Miss Mary, in English, to the old servant, whilst Monsieur De Favrolle, discreetly withdrawing, rejoined his friend, " of course you will return to Dublin ? "

" O, yes, Miss Mary, I'll go there anyhow," said John, whose eyes began to moisten.

" As soon as you arrive, go see my father, John. He was so uneasy, so miserable at the thought of letting me set out alone, that he would have accompanied me himself, only the expense of the journey

would have deprived my poor mother and sisters of food for a month."

Here the poor fellow fairly burst out a crying.

"Oh! the Cross of Christ about us," he sobbed, "Miss Mary, don't talk that way or you'll break my heart. Your mother and sisters that used to roll in their carriages, and that fed more poor people than the Union Poorhouse ever did, to be left without food! Oh! may the Holy Saviour protect us! sure it isn't come to that?"

"Yes, John, it is come to that; and now the best thing we can do is to look at our misfortunes right straight in the face. You can tell my father of the proposal I have made to one of my travelling companions. It was, I think, the best thing I could do, if I'm to believe what you told me, John, although your slight acquaintance with the French language may have misled you as to the precise meaning of the gentleman's words."

"Oh! I don't think I am mistaken at all, Miss Mary; but I can now see very plainly that he has repented, on learning by your language that you are a *lady*. I hope he'll only keep his promise, for those other young fellows that follow the old gentleman, singing, laughing and dancing, make me very uneasy about you.— Why not wait till to-morrow?"

"Finding myself to be the only woman in the carriage, I had thought of that; but all the seats for to-morrow and after to-morrow are taken, and I should have to remain here for three days longer. And the hotel-living is a little too expensive for my light purse," she added with a sweet smile. "I have just enough of money to take me to my place of destination

and no more. But don't be alarmed, John, those wild young fellows that are laughing and singing are rather silly than wicked, and in any case M. De Favrolle will protect me from them. My request has been a little too bold perhaps—but that my father and mother shall decide. You will tell them, John, that you have seen me in good health at Calais. Assure them that I am full of courage and resignation. Tell them also that I will write to them from the first town where we shall stop for any time. Tell Kate, Eveleen, and Annie that their sister Mary is always thinking about them—and as for little Ellie" —and the young girl tried to smile as she dried her eyes,—"tell her to be a good girl and that her big sister Mary will send her a pretty doll from France for a Christmas gift—though, John, I shall be miserable enough when that holy season comes round which is so much beloved and venerated in our dear native land."

"Oh! Miss Mary, can I ever forget the grand Christmas times at Clara Cottage? The midnight Mass in the little chapel, the grand dinner in the dining-room for the grand folks from the city, and the mistletoe and the holly, and the ivy in the drawing-room, and the beautiful tree in the nursery, hung with candles and toys and things for the children, and the plum-puddings, and barrels of ale in the kitchen, free and welcome to everybody that came along, and the poorer the welcomer!"

"These happy times are gone forever, John, and it is as good to forget them.—Tell them all, in short, that, though far away from them in body, Mary is always present with them in spirit—and—and—"

"And you're going to live like a servant in a strange house!" John burst out, unable to restrain his feelings. "You a servant, my darling Miss Mary! Oh! it can't be true!—When I think on the last time I saw you at Clara Cottage! You were cantering along on your splendid colt, Black Hawk, between the squire and Captain O'Reilly, so gay and so happy, while your mother and sisters followed in the green phaeton, drawn by the splendid grey horses, Farragh and Tearaway, little Bobby Grace, the postillion, driving them. It was a beautiful morning in July, and you were going to join a picnic to be held near the waterfall at Kilfane."

"I shall never regret those times, John, if I can some day return to my dear father and mother and make them feel less unhappy. But, do you know, John, what I feel the most after the agony of leaving my family? It is to leave green Erin, our dear old Ireland! Oh! I never felt until yesterday how much I loved that dear, sweet, good land!"

"Gentlemen and ladies, all aboard!" cried one of the clerks; "time is up; look alive!"

And seeing Miss Mary's little trunk still at her feet, he added roughly—

"But, madam, your baggage should have been put up on the roof long ago. What are you thinking about?"

"Excuse me, sir," said Miss Mary, a little confused, "I did not know that."

At the man's rough exclamation, John's face had become as red with anger as a gamecock's comb. Off went his coat like lightning, and he was advancing towards the clerk with decidedly hostile intent,

when, fortunately, a glance from Miss Mary rendered him as meek as a lamb, and without saying a word, he took the trunk on his shoulder and awaited orders.

At this moment M. De Favrolle approached the young girl with redoubled courtesy and respect, saying:

"I should be sorry, Mademoiselle, to abuse the privileges of my part, but, for outward effect, I think it would be well if you did me the honor of accepting my arm."

"Certainly, sir," said Miss Mary, smiling; "I accept it with pleasure."

Then the young man presented his friend, saying:

"I have been obliged, Mademoiselle, to take my companion into our confidence. Permit me to introduce him: M. George De Montfort."

M. De Montfort bowed respectfully to Miss Mary, who returned his salute, and all three, followed by John Welsh, repaired to the yard where the diligence was waiting for them.

M. De Favrolle gave his hand to Miss Mary to help her into the carriage after she had taken her last leave of John. The poor servant, with tears streaming down his cheeks, said to the young gentleman, in his bad French and with a broken voice:

"Oh, sir! have a careful eye over Miss Mary, I beg of you. Her father, Squire O'Connor, was one of the richest gentlemen in the country. He had the most splendid horses in his stable, all of the purest Irish blood, and a pack of sixty beagles, and as for the greyhounds and the pointers, there was no end of them. You see that Miss Mary is a *real lady*, and deserves every attention."

However artless John Welsh's recommendation might appear, viewing as he did all things from a huntsman's point of view, and expressing his regrets accordingly, still it was not without its effect. We are all so formed that the more exalted the state of opulence from which we hear one has fallen, the deeper interest we take in his misfortunes.

M. De Favrolle replied to John:

"Don't be uneasy, my worthy man. I shall perform towards Miss Mary all the duties of a brother, the most devoted and the most respectful."

The young man did not expect, in saying this, that he should be so soon called upon to protect his "sister;" but, just then, he saw her putting her head out of the window and saying to the Conductor, with a smile:

"Did you not tell me, sir, that my place is on the back seat in the right hand corner?"

"Yes, Madam."

"But, sir, that place is occupied by a gentleman already fast asleep. Any place is all the same to me, only I'm afraid of occupying in my turn some one else's."

And she quitted the carriage, while the Conductor entered it, and all outside distinctly heard the following dialogue:

"Sir!" said the Conductor, "Mr. Traveller! that is not your place! It is a lady's! Hey, down there. Answer!"

"Take care what you're about, Conductor.—Edward Joseph is slumbering!"

"I open a national subscription to kiss his old forehead while he's asleep!"

"Hello! He's deaf, I believe," cried the Conductor. "Wake him up, gentlemen, if you please. It is time to start."

"Conductor, do you authorize us to wake up Edward Joseph for the benefit of the public?"

"Certainly, gentlemen, wake him up, and let us be done with this."

The two mad fellows immediately commenced to bellow with all the force of their lungs.

"Fire! Botardière is on fire! Fi—ar!"

"Edward Joseph, hear the shrieks!"

"Joseph Edward, listen to the yells!"

"Edward Joseph, open your dear little eyes!"

"Joseph Edward, don't you know my voi-i-i-ce!"

"Sir, excuse me," said Miss Mary to her pretended brother, for the young man, very much annoyed at those preludes of a stormy journey, began to knit his brows; "Excuse me, but I repeat, any place at all is the same to me. I should be sorry to be the cause of the least dispute."

But M. De Favrolle jumped at once into the carriage, and found the proprietor of Botardière entrenched in the corner behind a fortress of cloaks, carpet-bags, and parcels, leaving nothing visible but the top of his head covered with a black silk skull cap pulled down to his eyes, and topped with a travelling cap. Notwithstanding the frightful din that raged around him, and the piercing cries entering his very ears, the old boy seemed to be fast asleep, and a long snore resounded in his nostrils. M. De Favrolle, to put an end to this ridiculous scene, at first shook the old gentleman very gently, and at last so impatiently as to effectually prevent the pretended

sleeper from carrying on the sham any longer. He started up like a man suddenly awoke out of his sleep, and exclaimed in an angry voice:

"It is perfectly inconceivable that any one should take the liberty of disturbing me in this manner. Who is it that dares to disturb my repose?"

And addressing M. De Favrolle:

"What do you want, sir? I don't know you."

And pulling down his skull-cap further over his eyes, he nestled himself in the corner for another sleep, grumbling:

"It is perfectly intolerable!"

"Sir," replied M. De Favrolle, commencing with the greatest coolness to remove the luggage and pile it on the other seat, an operation that compelled the obstinate usurper to open his eyes whether he would or not—"Sir, I have the honor to observe that you occupy my sister's place, but I have no doubt that you are perfectly ready to surrender it to its owner."

The sudden appearance of M. De Favrolle in the carriage, and the polite firmness of his language when speaking of his sister, calmed a little the exuberant spirits of the funny young men, whilst M. De Botardière exclaimed, addressing Miss Mary's protector:

"Sir, by what right do you pretend to lay hands on my luggage? I am the first occupant of this place, so much the worse for those who have come too late. I keep my corner, sir. My gray hair authorizes me in doing so."

"No one respects gray hair more than I do, sir," said M. De Favrolle; "but I have the honor to repeat to you that that place belongs to my sister. You

will then have the goodness to quit this corner, sir; for I declare to you, sir, with all my regard for a gentleman of your age, that if you refuse to do justice to my demand, I shall be compelled, to my great regret, to employ force."

"Cursed journey!" exclaimed the cross-grained old fellow, rising up furiously. "Oh! when shall I get to Botardière?"

"*Ma foi*," M. De Favrolle could not help observing, "we are all as sincere as you, in wishing you there with all our heart." Then, turning towards the persecutors of the old gentleman, he addressed them in the most cordial tone:

"Gentlemen, I am accompanying my young sister. Permit me to hope from your courtesy a slight moderation of language during the journey. I shall be profoundly grateful for the favor."

"Why not, sir? Certainly," said one of the young men. "All right. Respect for the ladies is our motto!"

"We should expect the same thing of you," observed the other, "if we had a sister along. Rest easy on the subject, sir. We like our fun, but we know how to respect a young lady."

"Thank you, gentlemen, thank you," replied M. De Favrolle, "I expected no less from your kindness."

And quitting the carriage, he handed Miss Mary into it, who, very much regretting this little incident, took her seat in the corner on the right. Her pretended brother seated himself beside her, with his friend in front. Just as the young girl waved a last adieu to John, who stood a little distance off, wiping his eyes, the diligence set off briskly, whilst one of

the funny fellows of the *rotonde*, popping his head out of the window, cried in a falsetto voice:

"What the deuce are you about, postillion? Why don't you push on? I believe in my heart and soul I shall never get to Botardière!"

The hasty step taken by Miss Mary on the spur of the moment, though impulsive, was natural and, considering the circumstances, almost justifiable. But omitting all questions regarding its strict correctness, it was a course by no means expedient, and one which an older traveller would have very carefully avoided. As it was, it could hardly fail to produce some unpleasant consequences, and in fact soon led Miss Mary and all concerned into serious and troublesome complications.

CHAPTER II.

THE PARENTS.

MONSIEUR and Madame De Morville, owners of a beautiful property in Touraine, in the picturesque valley of the Indre, not far from Loches, had been residing there for several years. M. De Morville, formerly a cavalry officer of high grade, was forty-five years of age, and had a mild, noble and still agreeable countenance, though its extreme paleness showed that he did not enjoy very good health. In fact, one of his old wounds often re-opened and caused him very painful sufferings, which he carefully concealed from his wife. That lady, a few years younger than M. De Morville, was not pretty, but the vivacity and pleasing expression of her face, fully made up for its want of beauty.

One morning, about a week after Miss O'Connor had left Calais, M. De Morville entered his wife's room, holding in his hand an open letter.

"My dear Louise," said he "as we had agreed upon yesterday evening, I have just written to my brother. Here is the letter; we shall read it together, and I will send it off at once, that is, of course, provided that, after reflection, you have not changed your opinion."

"No, *mon ami;* far from changing my opinion, it seems to me that since we have taken that resolution a great weight is lifted off my heart."

"Here then is what I have written to my brother."

"I only hope your letter won't arrive too late in Dublin!"

"Oh! I think it will get there just in time. I will dispatch it this evening by the courier; after to-morrow evening it will be in Paris, and in five days from now it should arrive in Dublin, unless the steamer from England to Ireland be delayed by bad weather, which is not impossible. Here then is what I write to my brother."

And M. De Morville read the following letter:

"My Dear Augustus:—This letter must certainly surprise you; its import is completely opposed to my letter of the 19th. But after long and serious reflections, Louise and I beg to revise the decision which we had given as final with regard to Miss O'Connor. To any one else but you, my dear brother, I should feel myself obliged to explain that this sudden change, however unreasonable it may seem, cannot be attributed either to fickleness of character or to a fatal habit of indecision. You know me, you know Louise's steadiness, you know that her affection for our dear Alphonsine is as tender as it is enlightened; you will comprehend then, that it takes very grave reasons indeed to oblige us to refuse to-day what we accepted with thanks a week ago. In a word, we renounce, with every formality, the idea of receiving Miss O'Connor as governess. We renounce it with regret, with great regret. Everything that you had written to us about that young lady had inspired us beforehand with as much love for her as esteem; for my wife and I repose an absolute, blind, or, I may

rather say, a very intelligent confidence in your excellent judgment,—in your perfect tact. Miss O'Connor was, according to your report, such a governess as is rarely to be found. What pleased us peculiarly was that Miss Mary, having hitherto instructed only her younger sisters, should be still in all the freshness of her mind, and could have formed no pedantic habits.

"We had then accepted her services because she suited us in all points. Accustomed to the calm, pure life of the country, where she had passed her days; raised under the eye of a father of the most honorable character, and of a mother of superior mind and excellent heart; a perfect musician; sketching like a master; of an instruction solid and varied; speaking French and Italian as correctly as English; of a temper at once mild, equable and firm; of a disposition lively and full of merriment (before misfortunes had befallen her family); in short, dear brother, you had discovered for us a TREASURE, and we had accepted it with joy. If I insist so much on the rare qualities of Miss O'Connor, it is to convince you that we appreciate them fully as much as they deserve; and that if we renounce this treasure it is because we have finally decided, my wife and I, after long and thoughtful discussion, *never to take a governess again for Alphonsine.*

"To explain the reasons of this our inalterable resolution, my dear brother, would carry me off too far just now. We think you can if you deem it proper, show the preceding part of this letter to Miss O'Connor's family. We here express, in all sincerity, our deep regret and unbounded esteem for

that young lady. Tell Mr. and Mrs. O'Connor that we were profoundly touched by the confidence they placed in us, by entrusting us with their daughter, and that she should have found in our house a real home. You told us in your last letter,—your reply to that in which we formally accepted your proposal with regard to Miss O'Connor,—that she would leave Dublin in about a fortnight. The present letter must arrive in time enough to acquaint her family with our decision. I should have written to you earlier on this matter, but it was only yesterday evening, as I said before, that Louise and I came to a final decision.

"My wife and daughter send you their love. Gérard has just entered his rhetoric year. When he gets through he returns home, where I shall keep him for two years before I send him to Paris to study law. He is, as you know, only eighteen, and I will not be sorry to see him ripen a little under my own eyes before exposing him to the dangers of the metropolis. Imagine his mother's joy, for you know how much we love the young fellow, and what good reasons we have for loving him.

"My uncle, De Botardière, is gone to Dunkirk on some business, and in spite of our remonstrances, he has preferred, from motives of economy, to travel alone and in a public conveyance. He will soon return to his property, and we shall have him as usual often here as our neighbor. I see you already curl your lip, for you don't like, as you say, to be *Botardièrized*—but really you are unjust. He is a little cranky, it is true, perhaps a little selfish, but at bottom our uncle is a good man.

"I fancy I hear your wicked wit muttering that 'certainly, our dear uncle must have something good about him somewhere or other, seeing that the kind Creator never forms such unsupportable creatures without some kind of compensation.' To this I reply, Mr. Sceptic, that this compensation is already found: *Uncle Growler* is our excellent and lamented mother's brother. That is enough in all our eyes and even in yours too, whatever you may say to the contrary, to absolve him from all his crotchety transgressions, even from that—for which you pardon him least—*of abusing the privilege of his gray hair.* It is true he does so, and this reminds me that when I was in the army he always insisted on making me accompany him to the theatre. There he often showed himself very troublesome, I might say, very insolent, to his neighbors, but at the least observation he cried out, 'Sir, you insult my gray hair! My nephew here, a dragoon officer, will bring you to your senses!' This was the way my dear uncle obliged me to give or receive two or three sword-thrusts, fighting for my life. However that may be, to every one knowing how to take him he is really kind; and besides, even without necessarily having a venal soul, I can't prevent him from being very rich, a bachelor, and from telling us, in his good moments, that he takes a pleasure in thinking that his fortune, accumulating rapidly by *his economy* (I see you smile, ungrateful man), is to be one day the inheritance of your children and mine.

"Certainly, cupidity has nothing to do with the consideration that we entertain for him. To-morrow let him be as poor as Job, and we would only receive

with redoubled attention and respect the brother of our dearly beloved mother.

"Adieu, my dear Augustus; our retirement is becoming dearer and dearer to us, and we feel much pleasure in reflecting that in two years our accumulated economies will have provided Alphonsine with a pretty respectable dowry. The time approaches when we must think of establishing this dear child, and since we are on this subject, do you remember one of my old friends, an army comrade, M. De Favrolle? I met him lately in Paris, where I had gone to spend a few days. We *talked family*, for he has a son twenty-two or three years old, who has been at the same college with Gérard. My son was among the *little fellows*, while Favrolle's son was among the *big fellows*. 'Your daughter is sixteen years of age,' says De Favrolle to me, 'suppose we thought of marrying her to my son Théodore.' 'Oh, that's all after dinner talk,' say you; but I tell you De Favrolle has splendid property in the North; he is a perfect gentleman, and if his son only resembles him——But I won't go on; I don't want to repeat the fable of the 'Milkmaid and the Milkpot.' The important thing is, first of all, to provide Alphonsine with a good dowry. We are trying to do so, without however making the least important sacrifice on the subject.—We live here like great lords, at a quarter of the expense of living in Paris. The habit of retirement has come to please us so much that it is certain that, when Alphonsine's dowry is once safe and secure, we shall commence to *work out* Gérard's by the same proceeding.

"You have almost made us expect your presence,

as well as that of your wife and children, here next spring. We are all delighted at the idea, including, of course, your old acquaintance, Madame Pivolet, who still continues to distract, and very often to vex, our leisure moments with those fabulous inventions and imaginations with which you have been often so astounded. Happily, however, our dear Alphonsine, when deriving nourishment from the breast of this *bouncing* nurse, has inherited none of that monstrous spirit of exaggeration, thanks to which the incorrigible creature turns so many mice into elephants and mole-hills into mountains.

"Once more, adieu, my dear brother. We rely on you implicitly to be our interpreter with Miss O'Connor and her family, to excuse us, to defend us even, if, to our painful regret and contrary to our expectations, they should find something uncourteous in this sudden change of our intentions, which, once more, may be resumed in two or three final unalterable words:—*We are decided on taking no governess for Alphonsine.* But for this, I repeat, we should have accepted with delight, with happiness, with gratitude, the services of Miss O'Connor.

"With kindest love from all here to your wife and children, and expecting an immediate reply,

"I am, dear brother,

"*Tout à toi,*

"A. De Morville."

Madame De Morville, after having listened in silence to the reading of the letter, observed to her husband:

"That letter is perfect, *mon ami*, and, even admitting an excessive susceptibility on the part of

Miss O'Connor and her family, that susceptibility seems to me to be spared as much as possible by the manner in which you represent, after all, the real state of the case."

"Then, my dear Louise, you are quite decided? I may send off the letter? Remember, after so formal a refusal, it would be impossible to ask Miss O'Connor's services again."

"How can I say it, *mon ami?* I have one terrible fault. I am a jealous mother! Never, no, never, can I be able to express to you all I have suffered in silence during these last three years. Every day, seeing a stranger between my daughter and myself——"

"Louise, Louise!" interrupted M. De Morville, with an accent of mild reproach, "I have often scolded you on this subject. This jealousy, though springing from an excellent sentiment, is hardly reasonable. Like most other ladies, you have not received sufficient education to teach your daughter music, drawing, and foreign languages. It is a little misfortune, but you must accept it with resignation."

"No, on the contrary, it is a great misfortune, *mon ami.* Ah! how often have I wept over my incapacity! A mother should supply her daughter with nourishment of the mind as she has given her life of the body."

"Be it so—that would be preferable. It would be better also if I were able to give Gérard his education. Thus we could have kept him at home. But, in short, I say again, to an impossibility let us oppose resignation. We reside in a house forty-five miles from Tours. Therefore we could not get

Professors to come to instruct Alphonsine. We were obliged to take a governess into the house. But for that we should see our child remain, as to her education, very inferior to all the young ladies of her rank, and for her future prospects that would be a very grave consideration. Many men seek now-a-days, and not without reason, in their wives, agreeable accomplishments and an extensive and varied information."

"These accomplishments, this information Alphonsine possesses already."

"Yes—she possesses them—pretty nearly."

"Well, then, she can study privately and thus lose nothing of what she has learned."

"I hope so. But we must not shut our eyes to the fact. Her education is still far from being complete."

"How many women know a great deal less than she does!"

"That is very true; and you yourself, my good and dear Louise, have triumphantly proved to me that a noble character and a good heart can supply everything.'

"Well, then, if that be so?"

Before her husband could reply, Madame De Morville added with a smile: "This 'well, then, if that be so?' shows great pride, I know, but it is to my daughter that I apply it, and I prefer a thousand times seeing her a little less learned than to see myself suffering from the torments of an absurd but most painful jealousy. In short, I may as well tell you, this love of the world which you encourage in me instead of blaming,———"

"Why should I blame you for it, dear Louise?" said M. De Morville, affectionately; "Is it not natural that you should seek some amusement in the society of your neighbors? Your life here is so lonely, so gloomy!"

"You bear it very well, for your part."

"Not only do I bear it very well, but it just suits me. My health is not very good, I love retirement and study, and I would never be barbarous enough to think of depriving you of your pleasures because they are a little different from mine."

"It is true, *mon ami*, that in spite of my taste for social amusements, I should indulge it less if I had more of my daughter's company. Yes, and very often I have let myself be persuaded to spend a few days more with some of our neighbors, because I said to myself: 'After all, my daughter don't want me; has she not her governess?' and then my heart bursts with jealousy."

"Come now, Louise, could you be seriously jealous of our last governess, that poor Mademoiselle Lagrange? To compare the affection your daughter had for her to that which she cherishes for you!"

"Was not my daughter oftener with her governess than with me, sleeping in the same room, living constantly at her side? Did not Mademoiselle Lagrange share in the, at that time, almost childish amusements of Alphonsine, from which maternal dignity excluded me?—Did not———"

"Why interrupt yourself?"

"Well, yes, however painful the confession, I must tell you that I am now quite decided never to

have a governess again, for, after all, I have not a bad heart.''

"Oh! Heaven knows it, certainly not!"

"Heaven may know it, but you don't know it any more than myself. That makes you smile. You are wrong, for, in short, was it a good or a wicked thing to experience, not regret, but a sort of hateful envy, at seeing a stranger teaching my daughter what I was incapable of teaching her myself? Was it good to say to myself with bitterness: 'This stranger is superior to me in one respect in my daughter's eyes, for, beside this governess, I, who neither know music nor drawing, nor foreign languages, nor many other things, am an ignoramus, a kind of blockhead, and, in spite of all her tenderness for me, must not my daughter think me a good for nothing?'"

"Hello, Louise!" said M. De Morville, laughing, "this is exaggeration with a vengeance, just *à la* Madame Pivolet; take care she has not bitten you."

"*Mon ami*, you are wrong to jest; I speak to you of sufferings, foolish but cruel, from which I tried to rid myself by accepting the numerous invitations of our neighbors, while you remained here alone with your books. These sufferings you have never guessed; I was ashamed of them; I endeavored to stifle them, to give no inkling of what I felt; for this poor Mademoiselle Lagrange was a lamb sent on earth by the good kind God. Still, in spite of myself, I broke out sometimes in snappish remarks, in ironies, absurd indeed, but which told too well. I saw that plainly by the good creature's melancholy. But even that is not all——."

M. De Morville had at first received these confi-

dences of his wife almost jocosely, but now he appeared almost as much surprised as afflicted, and he replied:

"Louise, is it you that I hear speaking this way? You whose excellent heart I have so often appreciated, so much admired?"

"Oh! you men can never understand a mother's heart. All mothers are not like me, fortunately. But in short, such as I confess myself, such I am. Another of my absurd jealousies you can understand just as little. I hated to see my daughter as inferior as myself to her governess. I was always saying to myself: There is a poor girl, born in a porter's lodge,—for Mademoiselle Lagrange's father had been porter in the boarding school where she had received her education,—there's a poor girl, without name, without fortune, who is and will be, in all matters of art and of knowledge, infinitely superior to my daughter, who is to have a fortune of fifty thousand francs a year! Do you want me to tell you something still worse? The only thing that made me tolerate this poor Mademoiselle Lagrange was, that she was, as you know, as ugly as the seven deadly sins. If she had been pretty, or even prettier than Alphonsine, in spite of all I could do, I should have held her in abomination. In fine, I must confess it, the result of all this has been that Mademoiselle Lagrange has thought proper to leave us under the plea of ill health, and it was only a plea—she had never been in better health in her life. As for the rest, I do myself this justice—I would have suffered everything to the end sooner than send away the good, amiable creature, and I freed myself

from painful remorse only on that day, when, thanks to our earnest exertions and strong recommendations, I succeeded in placing her with a most excellent family."

"Ah! Louise, how much in the right we have been in refusing to receive Miss Mary! Poor young lady! And if she had happened to be good looking! This I know nothing of: for, I acknowledge it, to this moment it had appeared to me to be a matter of hardly the slightest importance."

"Miss Mary? Oh! I confess now, that for a thousand reasons, I would have infinitely preferred Mademoiselle Lagrange to Miss Mary.—Gracious Heaven! how puerile, ridiculous, even odious, all this is, I know but too well; for, even from you, in whom I have the most unlimited confidence, I kept the greater part of these vexatious feelings carefully concealed, happy enough if they had annoyed only myself. But no; Mademoiselle Lagrange, of course, could not resist these thousand incomprehensible stings and thorns, and at last left the house. It was in vain that, in my regret for having wounded her, I often endeavored to make her forget the pain by little presents and redoubled attentions. She was a timid little heart; and still, with all her unalterable, meek, sweet way of doing things, she always contrived, without offending me, to refuse the peace-offerings I held out.—That was the inevitable result of my unfortunate disposition. It would be just the same with Miss O'Connor; for, I don't deny it, this refusal on our part——"

Then, interrupting herself, Madame De Morville added, with an expression of sincerity that commu-

nicated a touching charm to her animated countenance:—"No, after all, I'm not a wicked woman—I feel I'm not. For, I remember, my dear husband—very luckily, in time—that we have forgotten one very important thing in the letter to your brother."

"What is it?"

"A postscript."

"On what subject?"

"Your brother had told us that not only did the situation which we offered to Miss O'Connor assure her own existence for two or three years, but that almost every penny of her salary would be sent by her to Dublin, to assist in relieving the wants of her mother and her four young sisters. Poor things! How much they are to be pitied!"

"Louise, since your excellent heart of itself sees this objection, I will acknowledge that what had pained me most in our change of resolution, was to think that this interesting family was about to be deprived of a resource on which it had relied with confidence. I had been already seeking the means of——"

"Don't finish, *mon ami*—the thought rends my heart. But listen. We intended to give Miss O'Connor twenty-four hundred francs a year. It is not to save money that we have declined her services."

"Certainly not."

"Can we not, then, hit upon some means of sending, by way of compensation, I dare not say as damages, these twenty-four hundred francs to the poor family for two or three years?"

"That's impossible. You have read my brother's letter. Nothing can be more honorably proud and

sensitive than Mr. O'Connor's disposition. Not only would he not accept of an alms, but he would even be cruelly offended by such an offer."

"How woefully deficient you are in Madame Pivolet's imagination just now, my poor friend!" said Madame De Morville, smiling.—"I think I must send you to take a lesson from her."

"How so? Please explain."

"Am I crazy enough to think of proposing to Mr. O'Connor or his daughter a yearly allowance? Are there no other means of having our wishes accepted? It is in this respect that I tell you you are wanting in Madame Pivolet's powers of imagination; and I, myself, too, I acknowledge, at present can hit on no feasible plan. However—wait a minute—the very sound of the magic word *Pivolet* sets our inventive faculties agoing. Alphonsine is beginning to speak English: well, then, let your brother, to whom you can explain our embarrassment in a postscript, hunt up some good English books which have not been translated into French. Do you understand?"

"An excellent idea! He will ask Miss Mary to translate them for Alphonsine."

"And we shall estimate this labor as highly as we please. The most sensitive delicacy can find nothing to object to in that."

"Ah! Madame Louise," said M. De Morville, tenderly embracing his wife, "and to think that just now you accused yourself of having a bad heart!"

"Oh! I have my own ideas on that subject. Anyway, I don't want to be led into temptation. So, then, you approve of my idea?"

"I will run and write the postscript and then seal the letter."

Just as M. De Morville was leaving the apartment, his daughter, Mademoiselle Alphonsine, entered it.

"My child," said her father with a smile, "I am writing to your uncle. Have you no commission to give me, no contraband goods to get on the sly? You know he calls himself *Mademoiselle Alphonsine's bold smuggler*. A consul of France, too! What it is to have nieces!"

"No, father, I believe I shall not abuse dear uncle's kindness this time. Remember me to him most kindly, as well as to dear aunt and my little Irish cousins."

"Oh! that is done long ago; so I have nothing to do now but to close the letter, after having written our postscript, of course," he added, addressing his wife, whom he then left alone with his daughter.

CHAPTER III.

THE PUPIL.

MADEMOISELLE De Morville was sixteen years old, and very like her mother. Her face, without being pretty, charmed by its sweet, attractive expression; you could read on it, as in a book, the pure innocence of her soul and the open frankness of her disposition.

As soon as her father had quitted the room, Mademoiselle Alphonsine said to her mother:

"Mamma, is the letter that father is writing to uncle, relative to Miss O'Connor?"

"Yes, my child."

"It is then decided; she is coming.—Heigho!"

"Oh, gracious! what a terrible sigh," said Madame De Morville, smiling. "You are very much afraid, then, of the arrival of your governess?"

"Afraid! no, that is too strong an expression; but, if I had the choice—"

"Well, let us hear it."

"I should prefer remaining without a governess."

"Poor Mademoiselle Lagrange, however, was no tyrant."

"She! oh no, indeed! She was goodness itself, and then so fond of me,—in fact, a real sister."

"That's true; you could hardly do without each other, my Alphonsine. You were oftener with her than with me."

"That could hardly be otherwise. The time of studies—"

"And during your recreations also."

"But, how could it be otherwise, Mamma? Would you have played races with me, or battledore, or even dolls? For you know that it is hardly two years since I left off playing dolls."

"Yes, Mademoiselle Lagrange even played with you. Her good nature was boundless, to do her justice."

"Yes; but it was only whenever I had satisfied her by my work. If I did not, she was very severe, but always strictly just, and so kind, and so good, putting up with everything, never complaining!"

"I don't see very clearly what she could have to complain about. In short, are you sorry for her?"

"Indeed I am. Before finding such another governess——Do you think your Miss O'Connor shall equal her?"

"Why not?"

"Mamma, I assure you, you shall never have the like of Mademoiselle Lagrange again. Just listen: such a sweet disposition! and then she knew so much! such talents for music! and drawing! knowing perfectly how to take you in order to instruct! letting herself down to you, in short."

"How letting herself *down* to you?"

"Just so, Mamma; for, as to knowledge, she was, and always will be, a princess, as it were, in comparison to me. And still she was only the porter's daughter of the boarding school where she was raised! She never denied it a bit."

"So far from that, she even affected a little, it seemed to me, to talk of the humility of her birth."

"She affect! Oh! Mamma, that is a little mistake. Whenever she chanced to speak of her family, it was only when the conversation called for it. Besides, I tell you what, if Mademoiselle Lagrange had been proud she had very good reason."

"Proud of what? Not of her beauty, certainly, poor girl——"

"No, that's true. But, don't you know, Mamma, that it was a very fine thing to be a governess, to be thus enabled, by her labor, to provide for herself and help her family besides?—I would just ask you, Mamma, what could I do, if I were in her place?"

"The answer is very simple, dear child.—If you were in Mademoiselle Lagrange's place, you would do as she and so many other young girls have done, full of courage, of knowledge, of goodness and of heart: qualities which, I acknowledge, Mademoiselle Lagrange possessed; for, you know, my dear child, what esteem we had for her."

"Indeed you had, Mamma; you were perfect, so was Papa; and, as for me, I loved her like a sister."

"So much so indeed that, for several days after her departure, I often found you weeping, and even yet you are often very low spirited. Nurse Pivolet's stories hardly please you any longer."

"Oh! Mamma, to separate all at once, after living together three years, is not very pleasant."

"This sensitiveness is honorable to your heart, Alphonsine. But, in short, it seems to me that you and I can find in our mutual affections enough to console us for the departure of a stranger."

"A stranger!" exclaimed the girl artlessly, "say rather a friend, a sister."

"Be it so! But, a mother is at least worth a friend, even a sister."

"How can such things be compared?" asked the young girl, embracing her mother with a charming grace; "does loving your sister prevent you from idolizing your mother?"

"My dear child," replied Madame De Morville, with sweet emotion, "I have never doubted your tender affection; only I don't know why a mother, let her be ever so much beloved, cannot be her daughter's companion."

"Oh! gracious! no, Mamma, that is quite a different thing. A mother can't very well be her daughter's companion."

"How so, dear daughter?"

"For instance, Mamma, you are always extremely kind and affectionate towards me, you know; but, still I have always to look up to you as my mother, and, as such, deserving my deepest respect as well as my most devoted love. There are thousands of little trifles, fiddle-faddles, nonsensical jokes, tomfooleries if you choose to call them so, which I could never venture to talk to you about, but which amused Mademoiselle Lagrange and myself hugely, making us laugh until the very tears ran out of our eyes. And then our endless chatterings during recreation; even the childish games we had together, for she was a regular child when she put herself to it; all this made the study-time pass like a dream, and that of recreation like lightning."

"Oh! of course," said Madame De Morville, with a forced smile, for the poor jealous mother was suffering keenly, in spite of all her good nature;

"and, as for me, I never had the pleasure of the young ladies' society except during our walk before dinner or in the evening till tea hour, after which you retired to your governess's room. But, let us return to Miss O'Connor—"

"Oh! please, Mamma, don't speak any more about Miss O'Connor. It will be time enough for me to think of her when she comes."

"Whence comes this great prejudice against her?"

"Oh! I fancy I see Miss O'Connor standing there before us; a big, tall Englishwoman, with a cold, forbidding air, and if she ever becomes human enough to condescend to smile, showing us teeth three inches long."

"Ha! ha! ha! Not a very flattering portrait."

"Besides, if she were even a phœnix, she could never replace my poor Mademoiselle Lagrange. So, Mamma, I give you warning, I am afraid I shall hardly prove satisfactory to your Miss Mary."

"Well, my child, I'm going to make you happy."

"How so, Mamma?"

"The letter that your father has written to your uncle, countermands Miss O'Connor's departure."

"Is it possible!—What happiness!" exclaimed the young girl in the most joyous tones. Then, checking herself: "Still, I don't know if I ought to rejoice. Perhaps I shall gain nothing by the change. Have you any one in view to replace Miss Mary?"

"No, nobody."

"Nobody?"

"Your father and I have decided that you are to have no governess in future. Are you not delighted?"

"Oh! certainly." Then, after reflecting: "But, Mamma, who then is to complete my education?"

"Yourself, my dear child. You are already a pretty good musician, you sketch well, you know English and Italian well enough now to study them without a teacher. When I say without a teacher, I mean I shall take my revenge," said Madame De Morville, tenderly. "I shall never leave you. Unfortunately, I am not instructed enough to take the place of a governess; but, in short, without being a musician, I have an ear true enough to warn you when you skip notes or when you sing false. I cannot sketch, but I can see very well if what you copy resembles your model. As for history and geography, by means of books I shall try to supply my own defective knowledge. And then," added Madame De Morville, in a touching voice, and almost moved to tears, "You will be indulgent, won't you? You will take my good will into consideration. In short, I shall do all I can to keep you from regretting your governess too much."

"Oh! mother, on the contrary you restore her to me," cried the young girl, with an expansive burst of affection, throwing her arms around her mother's neck: "I will love her in you as I will love you in her."

"And not only shall I share in your studies," resumed Madame De Morville, responding with ineffable happiness to her daughter's embrace, "but I shall also share in your recreations. You shall find that I am not so much *mother* as I appear, and that I can be gay, laughing, and as pleasant company as any one else. And then those visits, sometimes rather

prolonged, which I often make in reply to the invitations of our neighbors, and of which you complained so tenderly, I shall never make them again. All my moments shall be consecrated to you; in short, I will do all I can to make up for lost time."

The conversation was suddenly interrupted by noisy steps and cries of terror in the adjoining room. Madame De Morville and her daughter started up in affright, and they saw a stout, short little woman, who seemed to waddle rather than to walk,—burst into their chamber with a face expressive of the wildest consternation. It was Madame Pivolet, formerly Alphonsine's nurse, and now the housekeeper, as the large bunch of keys hanging from the girdle round her waist plainly showed. She rushed in furiously, raising her hands to heaven and crying:

"Oh! Madame, what a misfortune! Monsieur De Botardière! oh! what a frightful accident!"

And without saying a word more she fell on a chair, throwing her head back, as if in a faint. Madame De Morville and her daughter, extremely uneasy, though they had often before been the dupes of the housekeeper's highly colored exaggerations, approached her and demanded eagerly:

"In the name of heaven, Madame Pivolet, speak! What is the matter? What has happened to M. De Botardière?"

"Has my uncle returned? Answer! oh! why don't you answer?"

"Ah! Madame—ah! Mademoiselle," said the housekeeper, shaking her head with extreme dejection, "it's all over!"

"What's all over?"

"Oh! it's frightful! Unfortunate Monsieur De Botardière! He had (not meaning disrespect) a very hot temper. But poor dear gentleman! such a fate!"

"My uncle is here, then?" exclaimed the girl.

"Such a fine old man!" resumed Madame Pivolet, in a tone of disconsolate lamentation, "such a green old age!"

"Finish, I tell you," said Madame De Morville. "It is miserable to keep us this way in suspense. Once more, what has happened?"

"Excuse me, Madame, but the emotion, the horrible spectacle——"

"Oh! Mamma, I have not a drop of blood left in my veins!"

"Nor I either, I assure you. Why don't you speak, Madame Pivolet?"

"I was just now in the court-yard of the château," said the housekeeper, with fluttering voice and wiping her forehead, "when I see a gig away down in the avenue."

"My uncle's gig?"

"Yes, drawn by the great big white horse that he calls—I mean that he *called* Ronceval, the poor dear gentleman!"

"How, that he *called!*" exclaimed Madame De Morville, wringing her hands in an agony of terror. "You don't know what you're saying!"

"Listen, Madame, oh! listen. I see the gig come nearer and nearer, drawn by Ronceval; the old horse was even trotting very quickly, which it is not often he does."

"What torture! Why don't you finish?"

"The gig draws nearer and nearer; it is only

about fifty paces or so from the iron gate when, all at once, when——oh, Madame!"

"What then, for heaven's sake, what then?"

"When, slap! bang! whiz! I don't know how many guns are let off at poor M. De Botardière, sitting quietly in his gig."

"Guns let off at my uncle! Impossible!"

"Impossible! Would to Heaven it were, Madame. Frightened at the volley, Ronceval takes the bit between his teeth, dashes into the yard like a demon, drives the gig smash against a post, knocks it into shivers, and what do I see rolling at my feet —I must even have some blood on my dress—but poor, unfortunate Monsieur De Botardière, with ten bullets in him at least, his body a compound fracture, his head and face a regular mish-mash! I saw he was breathing his last sigh, so I ran——"

"Oh, you're crazy!" exclaimed Madame De Morville, "and I'm crazy too for letting myself be again duped by your lying exaggerations! Why, there is my uncle's voice!"

And sure enough M. De Botardière's crusty voice was heard quite plainly in the next room, saying:

"It is quite possible! But I want the rascal to be driven away this very moment!"

And M. De Botardière entered in all the majesty of his obesity, having no ten balls in his body, and his head and face being by no means in a *mish-mash*. The only sign of a compound fracture about him was visible in his hat which, crushed, flattened, covered with mud, and with the crown hanging on one side, gave a very comical expression to the old gentleman's wrathful countenance.

"Oh! dear Uncle," cried the young girl, running to embrace him, "what a fright Mamma and I were in on your account. Happily it is nothing."

"How! it is nothing!" exclaimed the old gentleman, "to scare my horse by a sudden shot is nothing!"

"Uncle," said Madame De Morville, "it must have been one of our game keepers that fired off his gun, without being aware——"

"What is that to me? His being aware or not did not prevent Ronceval from starting off and bumping the gig so violently against the gate post that I was very nearly thrown out, and my hat flew off my head and got under the wheel. Look at the state of it now! I tell you, if Ronceval had not stopped of his own accord at the steps, I'm sure I should have followed my hat, and perhaps got crushed to death! And people call that nothing!"

"Uncle, it is far too much, indeed," said Madame De Morville, "but Alphonsine meant that it was very little in comparison to what it might have been."

Whilst Madame De Morville was thus talking to the old gentleman, Alphonsine approached Madame Pivolet, saying in a tone of reproach: "Here is another of your inventions; are you not ashamed, at your age, to be guilty of such abominable lies?"

"Mademoiselle, I saw what I saw. Your uncle was lying there in bits. He must have cured himself with the *Russia Salve*. It has wonderful healing properties. But I must go and get the poor dear gentleman's room ready."

And off went the housekeeper, calm and tranquil, her conscience untroubled by the least remorse.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RICH UNCLE.

M. De Botardière threw himself into an arm-chair and, wiping his forehead, exclaimed to M. De Morville, who had just entered:

"Nephew, I swear I shall return this instant to Botardière if the scoundrel that scared Ronceval is not discharged this moment. The rascal saw me coming, and fired his piece through pure malice."

"Uncle, excuse me. Robert was behind one of the lodge walls, and could not possibly have seen you."

"Very well, sir! Take your servant's part against me."

And, making for the door, he cried out:

"Let Ronceval be geared up this instant!"

"Dear uncle, please," said Madame De Morville, taking the old gentleman's hand and making him sit down; "surely, your threat can not be serious?"

"Yes, niece, I repeat it. Either that villain leaves the château this moment or I do."

"Be it so, uncle," said M. De Morville, "Robert shall go. Permit me only to tell you that he is a married man, has three children, an old mother——"

"Is that a reason that he should scare the life out Ronceval, and get me crushed to death under the wheels of the gig? The mischief! Nephew, you

are very considerate for people that want to break your uncle's bones!"

"You shall be satisfied, uncle," said M. De Morville, exchanging a look of intelligence with his wife, "Robert shall quit our service."

"There must be no shalling about it. He must quit this very day, before I set out for Botardière."

"Yes, uncle, this very day he shall leave our service. I am going in a moment to give my steward the necessary orders on the subject. Now, then, let us inquire a little about your journey. Of course, you are only just returned to Botardière?"

"I am returned two days, thank Heaven. I thought I should never return, so great was my impatience to see the end of that infernal journey."

"It was not very agreeable, then?"

"Agreeable! as I hope for heaven, I shall never forget that journey. It was about as agreeable as the reception that awaited me here."

"How so, uncle?" asked Madame De Morville, "did you come near being upset?"

"I wish to the Lord I was! Then that impertinent jade and her companion might have received some good bruises that should prevent them from going any further for awhile. Such a thorn in my side as they proved all the way from Calais to Paris!"

"You have no doubt, uncle, encountered some of those unpleasant adventures that people are so often exposed to in public conveyances?"

"Often! not at all, you're very much mistaken," cried the old gentleman in a tone of angry recrimination. "On the contrary, it is *very seldom* that

such brazen jezebels, accompanied by such impudent ruffians, are to be met with."

Madame De Morville, fearing lest the conversation was taking a turn not quite proper for her daughter to listen to, said to her in a whisper:

"Go, my child, and see if Madame Pivolet is getting your uncle's room ready."

The young girl left the room, and M. De Morville resumed the conversation, saying with a smile, to put his uncle in good humor:

"Still the same old boy, always in trouble about the petticoats!"

"Sir, again you're very much mistaken.—In trouble about *her!!* seizing as she did *my* corner, which I had to quit for her ladyship, sitting there surrounded by her lovers, one of whom, the favorite, conducted himself with an insolence, a disregard for my gray hair, quite unparalleled, during the whole journey! Oh no! I should be quite happy if they had only let me alone. But I was the plaything, the laughing stock, the butt of the whole Diligence. As I had often expressed aloud my wish to get soon to Botardière, a desire natural enough when one finds himself in such rascally company, my insolent and impertinent fellow travellers, at every stopping place we came to, would roar to the conductor: 'Is this Botardière? Ain't we yet at Botardière? Oh! we're never to get to Botardière! Where the deuce is Botardière?' The low blackguards! But as I don't keep my tongue in my pocket, I gave them change for their notes, I tell you."

"Indeed, my dear uncle," said Madame De

Morville, "such a want of respect to a gentleman of your age is at once vulgar and cowardly."

"Well, my dear, that is the kind of young men we have now-a-days."

"Fortunately, uncle, there are exceptions."

"Not one."

"Oh! come, uncle," said M. De Morville, with a smile, "you will make an exception in favor of my son, Gérard."

"Him! let him get only once arm-in-arm with that brazen female, like the puppy I'm speaking about, and he would not be a bit better than the next man."

"We shall take care, however, that he does not frequent such bad company."

"Well, then you will be right, if you can only do it. Just think: the impudent female, without the least regard for my gray hair, commenced by letting loose her gallant at me, who actually forced me to leave my corner, and ride sixth on that abominable front seat, with my back to the horses! At the *tables d'hote*, my lady was always helped first. It was a regular conspiracy between her and the rest of the travellers to leave me only the remains. But that is not all. One of those four ignorant fools, who, even in the very diligence office at Calais, had begun tormenting me, would cry out at every meal —'Waiter, a beefsteak *à la Botardière!* a cup of coffee *à la Botardière!* fried potatoes *à la Botardière!* an old turkey gobbler *à la Botardière!*' And then how they laughed! It was so very witty! Another animal had one eternal and stupid joke always in his mouth—'I open a national subscrip-

tion to hang up M. De Botardière's ten cent daguerreotype in every diligence, as a picture of the amiable traveller!' and such like ribaldries. When we were on the road again, by way of dessert, I was regaled with the whispers, smiles and other familiarities that passed, before my face, between my lady and her lovers. Accordingly, every time I saw her get out of that infernal diligence, though I'm not a bad man, I kept wishing in my heart that she'd slip and break her leg!"

"Indeed, uncle," said Madame De Morville, "it must be very disagreeable to meet such creatures in a public vehicle."

"And the best of the joke is, that she made her gallant pass for her brother!"

"After such shameless conduct," said Madame De Morville, "I should think such deception quite a gratuitous profanation."

"Pshaw! what do such creatures care for these scruples? I surmised there was something wrong, so I asked the conductor for the name of my gentleman. He looked at the list, and read: *M. Théodore De Favrolle.*"

"What name, uncle?"

"I say it it again for you, distinctly and plainly—Théodore De Favrolle. But, can it be that *you* know the impertinent young scroundrel, who, with his female companion, proved such a nightmare to me on that long, dreary journey?"

"I don't know the young man, my dear uncle; but if he is the son of M. De Favrolle, my old Colonel, his father is one of my oldest and best friends. It is only this morning I wrote to my

brother that, the last time I was in Paris, I had met old M. De Favrolle, and that he said to me, with a smile, 'Why should we not marry our children when they are old enough?'"

"Ah, 'pon my word, your daughter should have a nice husband! Besides, you know that after what has passed between the puppy and myself, to entertain such a project any longer would be an indignity."

"Uncle, listen to one word, I implore you—"

"What! I got rid of the fellow in the carriage only to meet him again at your house! Let me off! You shall never see my face again!"

"Oh! dear uncle, be calm for one moment," said Madame De Morville; "my husband is speaking only of a little expression casually dropped in conversation. Besides, Alphonsine is not old enough to be married."

"And suppose she was old enough, Madame?"

"Yes, my uncle is right, Louise," M. De Morville hastened to interpose; "without being a rigorist myself, and knowing well that youth, as is said, must have its fling, I acknowledge, uncle, that what you tell me of this young De Favrolle gives me a very unfavorable impression with regard to him. Hardly twenty-four years of age, and to conduct himself so indecently, to be so grossly deficient in respect to a man of your years——"

"And when you see his father, present him my regards for his hopeful son and his *inamorata*, for I soon found out she was nothing but an adventuress. While the conductor was looking over the list, I looked over it too, and, as there was only one

woman in the diligence, I soon found that my fine lady had taken an English name. Now mind, she is a French woman born, for she speaks French as well as you or I; but nothing less would satisfy her but to put her name down as Miss O'Connor—Hey! what's the matter?" exclaimed the old gentleman, in surprise, seeing that his auditors started from their seats and looked at each other in consternation. "What ails you both? Is there anything so very extraordinary in what I'm relating? What is there astounding in a French adventuress taking an English name? Oh, answer! You are gaping there like two statues—"

"Because, the fact is, uncle, that we *are* astounded," said M. De Morville. And, addressing his wife, "Can you understand it?"

"*Mon ami*, it is impossible. There must be some mistake," answered Madame De Morville, "besides the name O'Connor, I think, is common enough in England."

"What mistake?" asked M. De Botardière. "What are you talking about? Are we playing at *Cross questions and crooked answers?*"

"Excuse me, uncle," said M. De Morville "are you quite sure you read on the list the name of Miss O'Connor?"

"Ha! I suppose you take me to be blind! Do I know what word is made by an O, a C, an O, a double N, an O, and an R? The confounded name! I have reason enough to remember it all the days of my life!"

"And are you quite certain that she is a French woman?"

"I tell you that she speaks French as well as we do."

"Was she coming from England?" asked Madame De Morville, with much anxiety.

"Did she travel all the way with you from Dunkirk?" asked M. De Morville, in no less trouble, "or did you only meet her at Calais?"

"Will you both drive me crazy?" exclaimed the testy old gentleman, starting up. "How! I tell you that this creature has been the cause of the most disagreeable journey I ever made in my life, and you pester me with endless questions about her! By Jove, that's playing a little too much on my patience!"

At this moment Madame Pivolet entered the room, no longer with the distracted air that she had assumed to announce the unhappy demise of M. De Botardière, so suddenly brought about by the ten bullets in his body, but mysteriously, darkly, approaching on tip-toe M. De Morville, whom she addressed in a whisper, as if afraid of being heard outside:—

"Oh! sir——"

"Well! what is it!" exclaimed M. De Morville, in a loud voice and very impatiently: "what do you want, Madame Pivolet?"

But the housekeeper, with double mystery, lifted her hands and shook her head, thus signaling the necessity for profound silence, and then came quite close to M. De Morville before she whispered:—

"Sh! sh! sir. An extraordinary event, unheard of!"

Madame De Morville, knowing from old experience

the fertility of her housekeeper's imagination, of which indeed she had only lately been the dupe, and moreover being, as well as her husband, extremely uneasy on account of her uncle's rencontre with a Mademoiselle O'Connor, could not bear to be imposed on any longer by Pivolet's mysterious preliminaries, and addressed her curtly:—

"Speak, I beg of you, without those precautions, and that ridiculous pantomime. You know that half an hour ago you imagined you saw what you never saw—you understand?—Speak, then, and speak quickly."

But, Madame Pivolet was not to be so easily disconcerted. Still in a low voice, and this time addressing herself to M. De Botardière in order to secure a hearer less prejudiced against her usual fables, she said:—

"Ah! Monsieur De Botardière! If you only knew it! an adventure beyond conception!"

"What the deuce do you mean, you old fool, rolling your eyes in such a ridiculous manner?" said the old gentleman; "what adventure?"

"Just imagine, sir, that, two hours ago, M. De Morville sent a letter to the post-office."

"Well?"

"By Joseph."

"And then? Why don't you go on? Do you want us to pull out your words, one by one, as the dentist pulls out teeth?" exclaimed the old gentleman, while M. and Madame De Morville, more and more uneasy at their uncle's late revelation, and suspecting Madame Pivolet of one of her usual tricks, paid little attention to what she said.

"Joseph took the letter," resumed the housekeeper, "but in place of taking a horse, he took the wagon, and besides, as the steward's wife wanted to go to the village, Joseph took her along too."

"Well! what is there extraordinary in all that?"

"Wait a moment, sir, we're coming to it.—Joseph starts and arrives safe in the village. Now, then, we have Joseph in the village and the wagon along with him."

"Oh! go to fury!" exclaimed M. De Botardière. "You're a regular old bore."

"Excuse me, sir, but really it *is* incredible! He was putting up his horses at the inn, when what should arrive but the diligence from Paris."

"May the plague seize all the diligences in France and everybody in them!"

"Ah! sir, you are more in the right, perhaps, than you think for."

"How so?"

"You shall hear, sir. While the diligence changed horses, a woman, wrapped up in a shawl, her face closely concealed by a thick veil, could be seen to leave it very cautiously. Her travelling companions, men with long beards and a very gallows look, remained inside without stirring, but their eyes closely followed all her movements. It even appears that just as she left the carriage they made her some mysterious signs, and it is further said that one of them carried an enormous dagger."

"A dagger!" said M. De Botardière, swallowing the housekeeper's bait, hook and all, "and this veiled woman?"

"This veiled woman in her turn made a sign to the conductor, and all at once—all at once"—

"Well! what happened all at once?"

"All at once, the conductor took down her trunk!"

"What!—serve me right. A regular sell!—Pivolet, make yourself scarce, or——"

"No, sir, it is no sell; for that trunk was what you might call of a square shape, covered all over with strange figures formed of brass nails. When the trunk was down, the veiled woman entered the inn, and still shrouding herself in the most impenetrable mystery, she asked in a low voice the way to the Château Morville, and if she could be conveyed there, at no matter what price, offering for that purpose, it is said, such sums! oh! such sums! in short, as much as any one pleased to ask."

At these words, M. and Madame De Morville, were very much surprised. They had been listening with little attention to the housekeeper's story, though to do her justice, they knew that all her fabulous exaggerations rested on something real. She turned a mouse into an elephant, it is true, still she always had the mouse; she changed a molehill into a mountain, but she always had the molehill to build on.

"Hah!" cried M. De Botardière, more and more interested, "the veiled woman asked the way to the Château Morville?"

"Yes, sir, but still without lifting her veil, still surrounding herself with the most mysterious precautions, and always keeping a very sharp eye on that trunk."

"Is it a very astonishing thing that she should not like to lose her trunk?"

"But, sir, who knows what may be the contents of that trunk? I have seen and heard of trunks that——"

"Madame Pivolet," interrupted Madame De Morville, "if you don't cut it very short, if you continue to abuse our uncle's patience in your absurd way, I shall show him by your last story what little faith can be placed in your narrative, and what a ridiculous mania you have of making much out of nothing."

This menace produced some effect on the housekeeper, for she continued without any further circumlocution:

"Joseph was at the inn at the moment when the veiled woman asked the way to the château. He told her that he was M. De Morville's coachman, that he had brought his steward's wife to the village, that he was waiting to take her back, and that, if the veiled woman had any commission for the château, he would be very happy to take charge of it. Then, sir," continued the housekeeper, slowly, exulting beforehand in the effect she was about to produce, "the mysterious stranger told Joseph that she was expected at the Château Morville, and that she would take advantage of the steward's wife's company to return with her in the wagon, but still never separating herself, for no consideration, from that trunk."

M. and Madame De Morville, greatly surprised, for they were expecting no visitors, had not interrupted the housekeeper, but M. De Morville now demanded impatiently:

"And what did Joseph do?"

"Joseph, seeing Madame Dubreuil, the steward's wife, come up at that moment, acquainted her with the request of the mysterious stranger. She told him that since the veiled lady was expected at the château, they could of course all go there together."

"What!" exclaimed M. De Morville, "the lady is come here then with the steward's wife?"

"Excuse me, sir," replied the housekeeper, who did not give up her prey so easily and never exploded her catastrophes prematurely, "you must know———"

"Then she has remained in the village?" asked Madame De Morville.

"You shall see in a moment, Madame, allow me to finish."

"And no visitor is expected here?" said M. De Botardière to his nephew and niece; "nobody has written to you?"

"Nobody, uncle;" replied M. De Morville, "so I am almost certain that the lady is not coming here. But Pivolet, go on quick—what has become of this unknown lady?"

"The steward's wife having offered to take her to the château——Ah! I forgot an important item. The strange woman, besides that trunk and her carpet bag, had in her hand a morocco case about the size of a sheet of letter paper, very flat, and———"

"Stop this nonsense," cried M. De Morville. "Did the lady remain at the village?"

"Oh! sir, if you perplex me in this way, I shall never come to an end. I don't know where I was."

"Oh! what patience!" exclaimed M. De Morville, "what patience!"

"Ah! now I remember!" resumed Madame Pivolet, "the steward's wife having offered to take her to the château, the veiled woman accepted the proposal immediately, but, still restless and uneasy about that trunk, she would not enter the wagon until she saw it fastened carefully up behind. Then she got in, and both———"

"Are in the château now!" exclaimed M. De Botardière; "why did you not tell us that at first? Ah! Pivolet, if you were my housekeeper, I'd teach you how to spin a yarn, with a good stick!"

"But this lady," demanded M. De Morville quickly, "where is she now? Answer! Is she at the steward's house or is she here?"

Pivolet looked around with a frightened air, and fumbled in her pocket, whence she finally extricated a card, saying in a low voice:

"The strange lady is down stairs, in the summer drawing-room. She gave me this card for Madame."

M. De Morville, stamping impatiently, snatched the card out of the housekeeper's hand, and read aloud and mechanically, the name—

"Miss Mary O'Connor."

CHAPTER V.

THE DEBATE.

At the name of Miss O'Connor, thus so unexpectedly found on the visiting card, and so unexpectedly read aloud by M. De Morville, that gentleman, his wife, and M. De Botardière, almost simultaneously burst out into different exclamations.

"She must have anticipated the appointed day of her departure from Ireland!" cried Madame De Morville.

"She cannot possibly be the same person that my uncle met in the diligence!" cried M. De Morville, in mortal anguish.

"Oh! this is too much!" cried M. De Botardière in his turn, extremely incensed. "How! that adventuress, that scorpion, that scourge, to come to persecute me even here! what insolence! what effrontery!"

"What! the mysterious lady an adventuress! I thought so," exclaimed Madame Pivolet in *her* turn; "I suspected something of the kind all along. Madame, perhaps she is the *Female Bandit!* Those black-looking fellows with long beards, armed to the teeth with daggers and pistols and carbines, who made her so many secret signs as she was leaving the carriage, must be her followers! They have made their plan. The château is lonely. Oh! we shall certainly be murdered to-night! Yes, my dear master and mistress, it's all over with us!"

And very little more would have made her begin screaming murder!

M. and Madame De Morville were so confounded, so perplexed, that they let Madame Pivolet give full vent to her teeming fancies. So, seeing that she received no answer from them, she turned to M. De Botardière, and suddenly seized his arm with her trembling hand, saying:—

"Sir, don't you think she is a *Female Bandit?* She has secret poisons in that morocco case, and all kinds of combustibles in that trunk. That's the reason she would never lose sight of it. It's all clear now. The château is to be pillaged and burned to-night. Not a stone shall be left on a stone!"

And then very little more would have made her begin screaming fire!

"There's one thing certain about the matter anyway," said the rancorous, but very clearheaded, old gentleman.—"I require this adventuress to be driven from the château without a moment's delay!"

"I will run and execute your orders, sir; I will get all the servants armed," cried the housekeeper, heroically; "her accomplices cannot be far off. They must be the rascals that fired at Monsieur De Botardière! Crime will out! Oh, the greatness of Providence! Yes, sir, I'll run right off and send Joseph to the village for the gendarmerie!"

And the housekeeper was rushing to the door, when M. De Morville seized her violently by the arm, saying shortly:

"Stop there!"

Then turning to M. De Botardière:

"Uncle," said he, "the affair must be one thing or the other. Either the lady down stairs is Mademoiselle Mary O'Connor, an English governess recommended to us most strongly by my brother Augustus, and in that case it is impossible for her to be the person with whom you have travelled——-"

"Impossible! why impossible?"

"Because, Augustus, whom you know as well as I do, would never send us as governess for my daughter, any one but a person perfectly honorable."

"Your brother Augustus, indeed!" said the old man, "a simpleton! a crackbrain! a pretty guarantee truly! He has let himself be duped by the adventuress, that's all!"

"Excuse me, dear uncle," replied Madame De Morville, in a mild and firm voice; "we are convinced that in a circumstance so delicate and so serious, my brother-in-law has acted with extreme circumspection and that his choice was excellent."

"Oh, then," cried the old man, highly exasperated, "I'm a goose, an idiot, a numskull, incapable of distinguishing a well bred lady from a vulgar, impudent thing that caused me a thousand vexations during that infernal journey!"

"We have no doubt of the perfect accuracy of what you have told us, uncle," said M. De Morville, "only it is evident that there are two Mesdemoiselles O'Connor. The one that is just arrived here, and who without doubt is provided with a letter of introduction from my brother, is one, and the woman who travelled with you, and who is at this moment where I neither know nor care———"

"It is quite clear," interrupted Madame De Mor-

ville, "that is the only means of explaining the affair. The name O'Connor is quite common in England."

"To the bottom of the sea with every one of the name!" cried the old man. "If they're all alike, drowning is too good for the best of them!"

The door of the chamber opened suddenly, and Alphonsine ran in exclaiming:

"Oh! Pa and Ma, do you know what? Miss Mary is come! She is down stairs in the drawing-room. I have just been talking with her."

"What! have you seen her already?" asked Madame De Morville.

"I was going through the summer drawing-room to get my uncle's apartment ready, when all at once I saw a young lady, oh! so pretty, so very pretty that I was struck quite motionless, the more so as I had not expected to see any one at all there. She arose, approached me, and said in French, with a sweet and timid air, 'It is perhaps with Mademoiselle De Morville that I have the honor of speaking?' 'Yes, Mademoiselle.' Then she took a letter out of a little bag which she carried in her hand, and handed it to me, saying: 'Have the goodness, Mademoiselle, to give Madame De Morville, to whom I have already sent my card, this letter from M. Auguste De Morville, the French consul at Dublin.' At these words I remembered the governess that uncle Augustus was to send us, and I replied: 'Then you must be Miss Mary O'Connor?' 'Yes, Mademoiselle; I left Dublin a little sooner than I had at first intended, and I took the diligence at Calais about eight days ago.'"

"It is she!" cried M. De Botardière; "it is that——"

"Uncle!" said M. De Morville hastily to the old man, "remember my daughter's presence. I maintain, on my honor, that you are completely mistaken. Therefore, I entreat you not to forget that from this moment Miss Mary is Alphonsine's governess."

"Oh! I'm mistaken!" said the old gentleman; "may be so."

And approaching Alphonsine, who, not understanding the meaning of the words exchanged between her father and M. De Botardière, looked at both with a surprised and uneasy air,—

"Niece," said he, "you say that this young lady took the diligence at Calais eight days ago?"

"Yes, uncle, so she has told me."

"What is she like?"

"Oh! pretty, adorably pretty! and her expression so sweet, so good! Mamma, just imagine Mademoiselle Lagrange, with perfect beauty besides."

"Beautiful, I don't deny it," replied the old man, hastily. "What color is her hair?"

"Light chestnut."

"That's so. And blue eyes?"

"Yes."

"She wears a straw bonnet, lined with pink?"

"Yes, uncle. Why, *you* must have seen her too?"

"Well, I have had that honor, probably. Her shawl is tartan, with white and green squares, and her boots of the same pattern, only smaller."

"Yes, uncle," replied the girl, more and more surprised, whilst M. De Botardière, smiling with an air triumphant and cruel, turned round to M. and Madame De Morville, saying:—

"Well! you see I was a numskull, and completely mistaken. You maintained it *on your honor*, Mr. Nephew!"

"Mamma," added the young girl, more and more astounded at the angry air of her uncle, and giving her mother the letter she had just received from Miss Mary, "here is the introduction from my uncle in Dublin. But, is neither father nor you going down to receive Miss Mary? She has been waiting alone ever so long!"

"My child," said her father, seeing his uncle ready to break out at the very idea of Miss Mary's being at all received, "go you, and keep company for a little while with Miss Mary; your mother and I will join you in a few minutes."

The young girl, extremely perplexed, left the room before M. De Botardière could utter a word; but, he soon exclaimed, in a burst of furious indignation:—

"How! After all I have told you, you presume to insult me by receiving this creature! Eternal death! I can't believe it!"

"Madame Pivolet," said M. De Morville, who had, till that moment, forgotten the presence of the housekeeper, and now seeing her stealing towards the door, either to have a good look at the *Female Bandit*, or to mystify the servants with this new and strange adventure, "you go right straight into this cabinet, if you please."

And he pointed to the door of a kind of little boudoir opening out of the chamber.

"Into that cabinet, sir?" said Madame Pivolet, decidedly demurring. "Oh! what for, sir?"

"To stay there till I let you out. Come, quick!" added M. De Morville, roughly, opening the door and offering to push her in by the shoulders. "In with you."

"But, sir, this is putting me into prison!" cried Madame Pivolet, in a whining tone, obeying her master's orders however; "this is putting me into a dungeon! You might as well chain me at once and fling me into a black-hole! Then, sir, I have not had any breakfast yet, sir; you want to starve me, sir, to torture me, to——"

The remaining words of Madame Pivolet were unfortunately lost to her auditors, for M. De Morville pushed her into the cabinet, double-locked the door, and then approaching M. De Botardière, said to him in a respectful but firm tone:—

"Uncle, I address myself to your honor, to the affection you bear us, and, if necessary, I will invoke the venerated memory of my mother, your sister, to implore you to assist us in a circumstance as difficult as it is inexplicable."

"Inexplicable? After all I have told you! After all you have heard your daughter say!—Are you mocking me? What! can you possibly still have the least doubt as to the identity of this adventuress, of this impudent hussey?"

"At present, uncle, unless I believe in *doubles*, which I don't, or in an absolute coincidence of a thousand particulars, which is still more difficult of

belief, I have no doubt that you have travelled with the Miss Mary O'Connor that we were expecting and who is now down stairs in the drawing-room."

"Well then! drive her out of your house at once, and put an end to the thing: it has lasted too long already."

"Have the kindness to break the seal of this letter from my brother Augustus, and to read it."

"What's the use?"

"I ask it as a favor; I implore you to do it, uncle."

The old gentleman, shrugging his shoulders with an angry impatience, read the letter whilst M. and Madame De Morville exchanged a few words in a low voice.

"Well! what does this letter prove?" said M. De Botardière. "It proves nothing at all, except that your brother has been the dupe of one no better than she should be."

"In that, sir," said Madame De Morville, "our opinion is completely different from yours. Miss O'Connor *is not, can not* be what you say."

M. De Botardière could not believe his ears, and said:

"Repeat that over again."

"I take the liberty to observe," said Madame De Morville, "that we are quite convinced that my brother-in-law has not been a dupe in the choice of the governess that he has been so kind as to send us."

"Ah! that's it, is it?" said the old gentleman in a sardonic tone; "then it follows that I am a liar,

and that I have invented, like another Pivolet, everything that I told you regarding this adventuress and her gallant?"

"My dear and good uncle, don't let yourself get angry, I implore you," said M. De Morville, with as much deference as affection, not however without a slight embarrassment. "We are between Scylla and Charybdis. We must either send away, as unworthy, a young lady most highly recommended by my brother, or believe that your memory has not been perfectly faithful with regard to several particulars of your journey with Miss O'Connor."

"Ah, then, I'm doting! I'm in my second childhood! why not get me shut up in a lunatic asylum at once?"

"Excuse me, uncle," said M. De Morville, "it often happens to the best of us to fail a little in memory. This is no unusual cause of many involuntary misconceptions."

"It is possible also," added Madame De Morville, "that irritated, as indeed was natural enough, by the annoyance of an unpleasant, tedious journey, you were in a state of mind highly unfavorable to do justice to Miss O'Connor, and that deceived unawares by appearances———"

"Appearances! when that insolent De Favrolle, in spite of my gray hair, overwhelmed me with his impertinence all the time, at the instigation of this Jezebel!"

"The circumstance of the supposed relationship between M. De Favrolle and Miss Mary, true enough, uncle, seems rather incomprehensible. Still, pardon me for insisting on this point, are you quite certain

that your memory is perfectly exact regarding those unbecoming familiarities which you say you have remarked between Miss Mary and M. De Favrolle?"

"Eternal death!" cried the old man, in a tone as exasperated as it was indignant, "I believe I'm insulted so far as to have my words doubted! I'm subjected to cross-examination! This is a pitch of presumption———"

"But, sir," interrupted Madame De Morville, "the question is, as my husband has told you, if we are to drive from here in disgrace a young lady whom we have every reason to believe to be most highly honorable. I am a mother, sir, and at this moment I feel how much I should be hurt if I heard my daughter calumniated."

"I a calumniator, Madame!" exclaimed M. De Botardière. "Ah! this is pretty treatment!"

And rising from his seat, he took out his watch, saying:

"It's now two o'clock. I'm going into my room. If this adventuress is not sent away from here, in my presence, by three o'clock, I return to Botardière, and you shall never lay eyes on me again. Indeed, I should start off this moment, only in consideration for my sister's memory which you have invoked, I force myself to have pity on you, and to give you time for reflecting. But take care! Once my resolution is taken, no tears or supplications can ever alter it. It shall be a separation forever. Good-bye for an hour, sir. I'll await your decision patiently."

"One word more, sir," replied M. De Morville, in a tone full of dignity, "it would give me profound grief to lose your friendship. But I would have the

courage to resign myself even to that cruel sacrifice sooner than condemn the humblest creature to disgrace, without giving him the means of justifying himself."

"As you please, sir!" said M. De Botardière; "in an hour I shall have the opportunity of testing these chivalrous sentiments, Mr. Don Quixote of distressed damsels!"

And the impracticable old man rushed furiously out of the room.

M. De Morville, seeing himself alone with his wife, observed: "Indeed, my dear, it takes every particle of my respect for the brother of my mother to contain myself: his violence, stubbornness, and overbearingness are beyond all bounds. His temper is becoming actually intolerable."

"There is no denying, *mon ami*, that, for many reasons, this unexpected arrival of Miss Mary has put me out a good deal. This morning I spoke to you with entire frankness; then I have had a long conversation with Alphonsine from which I derived the most flattering hopes. All my future happiness is now threatened, and my heart sinks at the idea. Still, it would be mean in us to yield blindly to your uncle's outrageous demands."

"Did you ever see the like?"

"His order to drive away poor Robert for an involuntary fault, is a new proof of his domineering, intractable spirit, which is getting worse and worse every day. But for that inexplicable, pretended relationship between Miss Mary and young De Favrolle, I could easily understand how your uncle took a dislike to the young lady, because she may have been

the involuntary cause of several unpleasant remarks and coarse jokes from the other travellers, tasteless and vulgar, no doubt, but which uncle brought on himself by his selfish, despotic and irritable disposition."

"Certainly! It is a new edition of what I told Augustus in my letter this morning. Whenever my uncle brought me to the theatre, he rendered himself insupportable to his neighbors, and at the first reply, he retired behind his gray hair, and put me forward to bear the brunt."

"And, in this unfortunate journey, as he had not you with him to take his part, he must have laid himself open to a thousand inflictions. I understand all that. But this pretended fraternity of M. De Favrolle with Miss O'Connor? It must be true. Your uncle does not know the young man, and yet he has given us his name. And then these unbecoming familiarities, said to have passed between the thoughtless young man and Miss Mary! I admit that your uncle exaggerates, but nevertheless this is a very grave consideration."

"Still, how can we suppose Augustus to be so incredibly deceived as to Miss O'Connor?"

"In his desire to relieve an unfortunate family, he may have shut his eyes on many things."

"Oh! Louise, do you think so? The question was to obtain a governess for our daughter, and that my brother, a man of sense and feeling, should have been so thoughtless—oh! I can't entertain the idea!"

"Well, be it so. But this pretended relationship with a young fellow of twenty-two?"

"Louise, we can't keep Miss O'Connor waiting any longer. Our delay in going to receive her must appear very strange, if not insulting. Put yourself in her place. She is three hundred leagues from her native land, and alone. She arrives in a house where she has a right to expect a kind reception, and here we have left her more than an hour down stairs. It is cruel treatment. We must decide on something without any more delay."

"On what? Question her on the facts asserted by your uncle?"

"No, that would be an insult."

"Still, *mon ami*, we must take your uncle's story into *some* consideration. As for me, in the first place, I can never trust my daughter to any one on whom the slightest shadow of suspicion rests."

"Neither can I, of course. But once more, what course to take? Remember she is waiting for us, and every moment of delay renders her position and ours more difficult and painful."

"Oh! my gracious! let her wait! so much the worse for her!" cried Madame De Morville, in a tone of impatient suffering; "why was she in such a hurry to come?"

"Ah! Louise, that's hard, and scarcely just. Mademoiselle O'Connor, in her zeal to please us, has come as soon as possible."

"You are right, my dear husband. What I have just said is odious. Poor thing! she was afraid of losing a situation not to be met with every day. Yes, I tell you that sometimes I hardly recognize myself any longer. This poor girl must have been born under a bad star to have come here."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Alphonsine.

"How, my child," said M. De Morville to her, in a tone of slight reproach, "you have left Mademoiselle O'Connor alone, instead of keeping her company until we can see her ourselves."

"Excuse me, father," replied the girl, timidly, "but I think I have been right in coming here. If you only knew how the poor young lady becomes more and more embarrassed every moment! She is as much surprised as uneasy at seeing neither you nor mother. My heart bleeds for her. Not that she has expressed by any means her astonishment at your apparent forgetfulness. On the contrary, she kept on talking of my uncle in Dublin and of his family with the deepest gratitude. But I easily saw that at not seeing you make your appearance, her face got sadder and sadder; I think I even saw tears start from her eyes. Then I took it on myself to say; 'Mademoiselle, you must not be surprised at not having as yet seen any sign of Papa and Mamma. They are just now closely engaged with one of my granduncles, who has just arrived from a long journey, and whom they have not seen for a long time.'"

"Very well said, indeed, my dear child," said her father tenderly, "your heart has served you well."

"I think so, Papa; for my words seemed to relieve Mademoiselle O'Connor of a great weight. Her face expanded and I thought she looked at me most thankfully. So, seeing me rise, she said, 'Do not, I beg of you, Mademoiselle, disturb M. and Madame

De Morville on my account. It is only quite natural that they should spend some time with a dear relation after a long journey!' But, notwithstanding that, I have come as fast as I could to tell you that I am not at all afraid of Miss Mary, and that I am glad that your letter for my uncle in Dublin, of which of course I have not said a word, started a little too late, for I think Miss Mary will fully console me for the loss of Mademoiselle Lagrange."

"My dear Louise," said M. De Morville to his wife, "it is impossible to keep Mademoiselle O'Connor waiting any longer."

"But, *mon ami*," replied Madame De Morville uneasily, giving her husband an intelligent glance, "have you fully reflected?"

"Yes, don't be uneasy, I have reflected on everything," replied M. De Morville, giving in turn his wife a glance to show that he had understood her. "Let us go down to the drawing-room."

Just as they were leaving the apartment, Alphonsine started, and said:

"Oh! Lord, father, did you hear that groan in the cabinet?"

"It's only Pivolet," said her father: "I understand the matter. You go and wait for us in your little study room."

"You will bring Miss Mary there soon, father, won't you? I want to show her my books and sketches and things."

"Go, and wait for us there, my child," was his only reply to his daughter, who immediately left the room.

"But, in short, *mon ami*," asked Madame De

Morville, "what are you going to say to Mademoiselle O'Connor?"

"I have my plan. We can clear up everything without giving her the least pain."

Saying this, M. De Morville proceeded to *unchain* Madame Pivolet, who came out of her *dungeon*, uttering the most tragical groans. She was just getting ready to launch out on the splendid subject of *her disenthralment from the Bastille and the untold pangs of starvation*, when M. De Morville cut her short by saying, in a distinct, severe, and peremptory tone:

"Madame Pivolet, I want you to listen attentively to what I am going to say. You have heard my uncle speak of a young lady with whom he travelled in the diligence. Through a mistake, he has confounded that young lady with the Mademoiselle O'Connor, who has just arrived in the château. I declare to you now, most solemnly, that if you repeat to any person whatsoever the words uttered by my uncle, in a moment when he lay under a mistake, you shall not remain in my service twenty-four hours. Don't interrupt me. I do not forget that you have been my daughter's nurse, or that you have been a very faithful servant. I will provide for your maintenance, but, I repeat it, I am beginning to get tired of your lies and your follies. On the very first repetition of this offence, you shall quit this house, never again to enter it. Remember Dupont. He was thirty years in my mother's service, but he too abused our indulgence. So we gave him a pension, and sent him off about his business.—That is all."

After saying these words in a firm tone, which did

not allow of the least doubt regarding the strict fulfilment of his threat, M. De Morville hurried off with his wife to wait on Mademoiselle O'Connor.

Scarcely were they out of sight before Madame Pivolet exclaimed:

"Yes, he'd do it! He has the heart, after all I have done for them, nursing and slaving for nearly twenty years, to allow me a pension and ship me off! That is the way he served old Dupont. He daren't show his face again in the house, no, not if he was to gain Heaven by it! That's the gratitude of masters to poor servants now-a-days! Ah! my fine young Englishwoman, *you'll* pay me for it all, and dearly too!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE GOVERNESS.

MONSIEUR and Madame De Morville found Miss O'Connor sitting in the drawing-room. She rose and hastened to meet them with a movement full of modesty and grace.

"Mademoiselle," said Monsieur De Morville, with a little embarrassment, "have the goodness to excuse us for being so long about coming to welcome you to Château Morville."

"I knew already, sir, from Mademoiselle De Morville, that you were engaged with one of your relations just returned from a long journey."

"Yes, Mademoiselle," said M. De Morville, giving his wife a significant glance, unperceived by Miss Mary, who timidly kept her eyes lowered: "I even think M. De Botardière, my uncle, had the honor of travelling with you from Calais to Paris."

At the name of that surly old fellow, Miss O'Connor looked rather surprised, but her features did not betray the least embarrassment. She only raised her eyes to M. De Morville, saying simply—

"Ah! sir, I'm very much afraid I have been the means, though much against my will, of perhaps rendering that journey disagreeable to your uncle."

"How was that, Mademoiselle?" asked Madame De Morville.

"Madame, I fear that the details, which are quite personal, should hardly deserve attention."

"On the contrary, Mademoiselle," said M. De Morville, "nothing that concerns you can be indifferent to us."

"Well, sir, arriving alone in Calais," said Miss Mary, "I found myself very much embarrassed; an old servant of my family, whom I met by accident in the diligence office, had given me a warning of some unpleasant experiences that I was to meet with during the journey."

"Experiences of what nature, Mademoiselle?" asked Madame De Morville.

"The old servant had heard two young men, who were to travel with us, speak lightly about me," added Miss Mary, deeply blushing.—"They saw me alone,—they did not know who I was, and one of them, in the levity of his youth, uttered some expressions neither honorable to himself nor flattering to me."

"Infamous!" exclaimed M. De Morville. "Nothing is more sacred than a woman alone and without protection."

"I hasten to add," resumed Miss Mary, "that the young man who had permitted himself to mistake so strangely in my regard, having nobly and generously repaired, during the journey, the evil thought of a moment, has left me no regret for having taken a step, which, however, you must consider rather singular."

"What step was it, Mademoiselle?"

"Seeing myself alone for the first time of my life in a foreign land, learning that I was the only

woman in the diligence, deriving but little courage from the rough, noisy merriment of several of my travelling companions, warned regarding the few words that had dropped from one of the young men I have mentioned, Madame, exaggerating perhaps the consequences of their levity, and, above all, dreading, I confess, to be reduced to that extremity always so humiliating, so painful for a woman, that of being obliged to insist on the respect that is one's due,—I frankly asked the very one of the two young men who had so lightly judged me, to take me under his protection during the journey. And in order that this protection might appear reasonable and proper, I proposed to M. De Favrolle, that's his name, to pass for his sister. He consented, and I must tell you, Madame, that I shall never forget with what delicate kindness, with what perfect gentlemanliness, M. De Favrolle played the part of brother.—You see, Madame, it was rather a forward proceeding on my part—but—"

"But I understand it perfectly!" Madame De Morville hastened to reply, much affected both by Miss Mary's sincerity and the painful position in which she must have been placed. "I confess to you that, in spite of my age, I should be mortally afraid of travelling alone in a public coach, and I would have acted exactly like you, Mademoiselle, if the lucky thought had only occurred to me. With this difference, however," added Madame De Morville, smiling—"I would have asked M. De Favrolle to be so good as to pass for my son."

"We regret sincerely, Mademoiselle," said M. De

Morville, "that we are the primary cause of a journey that has left you so many painful recollections."

"Yes, sir, they are indeed painful, and now that I learn that M. De Botardière is a relative of yours, I'm afraid my presence in that coach must have added to the number of his annoyances. For, unfortunately, our companions forgot too often that it is only one's duty to bear in silence a few vexations, rather than try to pay them back by mockeries and jokes, which were the more to be regretted as they were directed against an old man."

"Between you and me, Mademoiselle," replied M. De Morville with a smile, "I may acknowledge that my uncle's temper is not one of the most amiable. You must have perceived that yourself, and perhaps even suffered from it.—We entertain, of course, for my mother's brother all the respect that he deserves; still we know by experience that he is subject to a certain roughness of manner——"

"Which should be excusable at his age, sir," replied Miss Mary with a sweet smile; "as for my part,—and I now congratulate myself upon it, I assure you—I never forgot that your uncle had gray hair like my own dear father. I regret to say, however, that, in two or three instances, M. De Favrolle —I will not exactly say, forced to it, but—in short—less patient than he should have been, could not, in spite of my earnest remonstrances, prevent himself from uttering some expressions rather too strong I thought under the circumstances, but which, I assure you, never passed those bounds which every gentleman should observe."

"What you say of M. De Favrolle does not sur-

prise me at all, Mademoiselle," replied M. De Morville. "His father is one of my best friends, and a man of honor, if there was ever one. I should be surprised indeed if his son—apart from his thoughtless expressions in your regard, which, however, he so nobly and so promptly repaired—should prove to be anything else but a perfect gentleman."

"Ah! sir, since you know M. De Favrolle's father," said Miss Mary with her usual candor and simplicity, "you will have the goodness to give me his address. I shall send it to my mother to whom I have written an account of my journey. She shall be only too happy to have it in her power to express to M. De Favrolle her deep gratitude for his son's generous conduct towards me."

"Certainly, Mademoiselle, with much pleasure," said M. De Morville, "such a desire is too reasonable not to be gratified at once."

"But that is not all, sir," said Miss Mary, smiling, "I have another favor to ask of you. Have the kindness to present me to your uncle. I want to show him that I entertain no spite on account of his lively remarks,—pardonable enough, anyway in a person of his age, who was rendered no doubt a little irritable by the annoyances of a long, irksome journey."

"I am sure, Mademoiselle," said M. De Morville, "that my uncle will make every reparation in his power for all——"

"Good heavens! sir, that is not what I mean. All is past and forgotten now. I only desire to deserve the good will of your uncle, as I desire to deserve that of every member of a family to whom I and mine owe such a debt of gratitude."

"Oh! Mademoiselle——"

"Why should I not, sir? I wish I could convince you that my position in your family is, for my parents and myself, a consolation in our reverses for which we cannot be grateful enough to a kind Providence. The more you are convinced of how much we owe to you both, sir and madam, the more you will feel assured, I hope, of my determination to fulfil, to the best of my power, my duty towards your daughter—a task, for that matter, likely to be pleasant enough, if I can judge from the few minutes I have already passed in her society."

"My brother has made us already aware, Mademoiselle, of the valuable aid you can give us in completing Alphonsine's education."

"Since you speak of your brother, sir," replied Miss Mary, "permit me to discharge a commission he has given me for Madame De Morville."

So saying, she opened and presented to Alphonsine's mother the famous morocco case which had excited Madame Pivolet's imagination so highly, and which she had shrewdly suspected to contain frightful poisons.

Scarcely had Madame De Morville cast her eyes on the contents of the case, when she cried out to her husband with a delighted air:

"What a splendid likeness, *mon ami*, of sister-in-law and her two children! Oh! it is excellent!"

"In fact," said M. De Morville, "it is almost a living, breathing likeness."

"And those two little angels," said Madame De Morville, "how prettily they are grouped around their mother's knees! What a beautiful picture!"

"I have never seen anything more perfect," said M. De Morville, who, as well as his wife, continued to gaze with new admiration on the pretty little aquarelle, as remarkable for the grace of the position, the purity of the design, and the excellence of the coloring, as for the faithful reproduction of the features.

"Indeed your brother Augustus spoils me. He could not send me a more charming present," said Madame De Morville, never tired of looking at the picture. Then turning to Miss Mary: "I thank you sincerely, Mademoiselle, for having had the goodness to bring me this portrait. But do you know that you have in Ireland artists of the first rank!"

"How is that, Madame?" asked Miss O'Connor, with much simplicity, her modesty having been very much disconcerted by the praises bestowed upon the picture.

"Not a doubt of it," said M. De Morville, still looking at the little water color, "this aquarelle is of a very rare merit."

"Indeed, sir, you increase my confusion," said Miss Mary, blushing deeply, "that aquarelle is my work."

"Indeed! Mademoiselle," said Madame De Morville, "your talent for painting is assuredly very remarkable."

"Madame, you are too indulgent. The only merit of this aquarelle is perhaps the likeness. Your sister-in-law gave me a few sittings before my departure from Dublin. I could not find a better opportunity of trying to justify what M. Auguste has

had the kindness to write to you regarding my talent for drawing."

"But such talent as that, Mademoiselle," said Madame De Morville, "surpasses, I assure you, our greatest hopes."

At this moment, the piano sounded in the next apartment, which was Alphonsine's study-room, and the young girl, after a short prelude commenced to play a theme from Mozart, to amuse herself while waiting for her new governess.

"That is Mademoiselle De Morville, isn't it?" asked Miss Mary in a whisper, listening attentively to the music.

"Yes, Mademoiselle," replied Madame De Morville.

Miss O'Connor continued to listen, with a visible satisfaction, involuntarily beating time with her pretty little foot, and saying in a low voice:

"Good, very good—that's a little too quick—remarkably good—oh! too quick again. The notes are not rendered distinctly enough. But that is better, much better——Bravo! that passage has been splendidly executed!"

"So, Mademoiselle," said Madame De Morville, charmed at Miss Mary's sincere approbation, while Alphonsine went on playing, "it appears you are satisfied."

"Very much so, indeed, Madame; some of these phrases have been rendered charmingly, and with excellent musical intelligence; others that were more difficult want a little more study and clearness."

Then rising, Miss Mary pointed to the study room door, saying:

"Will you permit me, Madame, to commence my duties at once?"

"We should be enchanted to hear you," said M. De Morville, "only we are afraid, Mademoiselle, of abusing your kindness. You must want a little rest, after your long journey."

"Oh, not at all, sir, I am only too happy to discover in your daughter a talent so near perfection, and must hasten to inform her of it as soon as possible."

All entered the study room. Alphonsine, covered with blushes at the sight of her new governess, was hurrying from the piano, when Miss Mary approached her, saying:

"I have been listening to your execution of this piece from Mozart, Mademoiselle. I come to congratulate you, and also to make a few observations. You see how quick I am to show myself strict, or rather, it is not I, it is you, who are strict. For the perfect rendering of a great number of passages, is the severest criticism possible on those that you have not yet studied carefully enough. Suppose we commence this piece over again?"

"With pleasure, Mademoiselle," said Alphonsine, sitting down again, charmed with the winning manners of her governess. As she played the piece over again, Miss Mary made remarks on the different passages, full of justice, feeling, and knowledge, showing that her musical education had been profound and extensive. Then, to join practice to theory, asking Alphonsine to yield her the stool for a moment, she executed the same piece in the best style, showing her pupil the passages she had

criticised and calling her attention to the difference of the rendering; in short, showing so much talent, modesty, and kindness, that Monsieur and Madame De Morville, completely charmed and won, could not help exchanging glances of the warmest admiration and satisfaction.

A servant entering the study room, said to M. De Morville:

"M. De Botardière begs you, sir, to be so good as to step into his room for a moment?"

This sudden summons rudely reminded M. De Morville of what he had completely forgotten. He started and looked at his watch. It was exactly three o'clock, the hour his angry old uncle had given him for deciding whether he would or would not send away from his house Robert, the gamekeeper, and Miss O'Connor, the governess.

At the name of M. De Botardière, Miss Mary said with a smile to M. De Morville:

"Please, sir, don't forget my wish and your promise regarding your uncle."

"Oh! no, Mademoiselle," replied M. De Morville, not without embarrassment, and, leaving his wife and daughter with Miss Mary, he went to his uncle's room.

He found M. De Botardière walking up and down the apartment with feverish and angry impatience. At the sight of his nephew, he stopped and asked roughly:

"Is that adventuress sent off?"

"Uncle, excuse———"

"No explanations. Is she off, yes or no?"

"But uncle, I———"

"Once more, have you sent her off?—yes or no?"

"No, uncle, and I can——"

M. De Botardière ran to the chimney, and pulled away at the bell-cord.

"Permit me, uncle, to observe that we generally at least listen to people before taking extreme resolutions. Give me your attention for a few moments, and you shall acknowledge yourself how unreasonable are your prejudices against Miss O'Connor."

A servant coming in to answer the bell, M. De Botardière cried out:—

"Have Ronceval harnessed at once, and let my gig be brought to the steps."

The servant having departed, M. De Morville said to his uncle, in a feeling tone:—

"Uncle, you cannot possibly wish to break with us forever, merely because I act like an honorable man."

"What a charming phrase! You call it honor, do you? To expose me, whenever I come here, to find myself cheek by jowl with an impudent creature who insulted me, and passed off her lover for her brother before my face!"

"Miss O'Connor has explained to us in the most satisfactory manner how she had been obliged to ask M. De Favrolle to protect her, and treat her as a sister during the journey."

M. De Botardière burst into a fit of ironic laughter. "By Jove, nephew, you *are* a goose! Imposed on at your age by such stories! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Uncle, I implore you, grant Miss O'Connor only ten minutes' conversation; then you'll see how much you're mistaken in her regard."

"Monsieur De Morville!" exclaimed the old gentleman, foaming with rage, "such an audacious proposal borders on insolence."

"Excuse me, sir," replied M. De Morville, with difficulty restraining himself, "such a proposal is that of a man who cannot and will not stoop to commit a base action, even though it should cost him the friendship of his mother's brother."

"Oh! yes, indeed—friendship! How much we are afraid of losing the old dotard's friendship!" cried the old gentleman, redoubling his irony. "I guess it is his property that we are afraid of losing. But that is a property that neither you nor your children shall ever touch one penny of! Do you understand that, Mr. Don Quixote of distressed damsels?"

At these cutting words, so painful at once to his manliness and his dignity, M. De Morville remained silent for a moment, but bursting with suppressed anger.

Just then Madame De Morville came in, and said to M. De Botardière:

"Uncle, I have just seen your gig ready. It is not possible that you leave us in this way?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the old gentleman, in the most sarcastic tone, "how much we are afraid that that miserable property is leaving us, rattling away as fast as Ronceval's legs can carry him! Why don't Alphonsine come and seize the dear old uncle by the coat tail, and implore him to stay here, her eyes streaming like fountains at the very idea of not coming in for that property!"

Madame De Morville, struck dumb at such expres-

sions, looked at her husband as if to ask the cause of such a reception. M. De Morville said to her, in a firm tone:—

"Louise, for the sake of your own dignity, for the sake of mine, not one word more! One syllable more would be a baseness!"

"A baseness!" said Madame De Morville, more and more surprised; "what do you mean, *mon ami!*"

"I'll explain it to you," said M. De Botardière. "Just imagine that your husband is decidedly a hero of disinterestedness! nothing less, my dear, and I congratulate you on it. I have given him this alternative: to choose between me or that adventuress, who is fooling you all. That is to say, pretty plainly: choose either her or thirty thousand francs a year, half the value of the Botardière estate, without counting my personal property, all of which you are to inherit after my death."

"Ah! sir!" exclaimed Madame De Morville, full of indignation: then, turning to her husband—"You were perfectly right, my dear friend. One word more *would* be a baseness."

The servant appeared at the door, announcing—

"M. De Botardière's gig is waiting."

The old gentleman took his carpet-bag, advanced towards the door, but, before leaving the room, he said to M. De Morville:—

"I still have compassion on you: I give you, then, one more chance, for the last time, to choose between my inheritance and the discharge of an impudent female, who shall dupe you both, and make your daughter as bad as herself."

"Excuse me, sir, if I can't have the honor of accompanying you to the steps," replied Madame De Morville, with an accent of perfect dignity, as she gave him a deep parting bow.

"Good!" cried M. De Morville, clasping his wife's hand, "very good, my dear Louise!"

M. De Botardière rushed out of the room, slamming the door after him with blind fury, and his gig was soon heard rapidly moving down the avenue.

CHAPTER VII.

A DOUBTFUL FRIEND; AND A DECIDED ENEMY.

AFTER the departure of M. De Botardière, M. and Madame De Morville remained silent for a few moments.

"This rupture, *mon ami*, is certainly very disagreeable," said Madame De Morville at last to her husband: "but, we have done our duty, even if it has cost us your uncle's friendship for ever."

"Thank you, noble and loyal woman!" replied M. De Morville, again warmly clasping his wife's hand. "Thank you, for having so worthily repelled even the very idea of a mean and cowardly concession to the caprice of a man so blinded by an unreasonable prejudice."

"Could I act otherwise, *mon ami*, after the very clear and natural explanation Miss O'Connor has given us regarding an incident in her journey, which at first sight, I acknowledge, was rather difficult to understand? Besides, as far at least as we have had the opportunity of judging, your brother has been rather below the mark than above it in his encomiums on Miss Mary."

"Very good, Louise! Very good indeed! Better and better!"

"What do you mean, *mon ami?*"

"Well, I'll tell you. After the accident that

brought us Miss O'Connor, whom we no longer expected; and after our long conversation of this morning, in which you made such painful avowals—the exaggerated nature of which I now see with pleasure—I will acknowledge that I was afraid Miss Mary would not be received by you as she has been. I was afraid that, without partaking of my uncle's absurd pretensions against the young lady——"

"Listen, *mon ami*," said Madame De Morville, interrupting her husband. "I am, you know, a woman of impulse, which I always prefer to reflection. I have not concealed it from you: Miss O'Connor's arrival has, for several reasons, very seriously annoyed me, I won't say quite afflicted me. I went down to the drawing-room in a mood very little favorable to her. But, to tell the truth, I have found it impossible to resist the charm, the frankness, the honorableness of the young lady, at once so modest and so worthy. What shall I say? I have been tempted in spite of myself to admire her rare beauty, though the contrast made poor Alphonsine almost ugly."

"Oh! come now, Louise," said M. De Morville, with a smile. "I must be a blinder parent, or, rather, keener-sighted than you are; for I assure you that Alphonsine's expressive and amiable face loses nothing beside the regular and stately beauty of Miss Mary's."

"*Mon ami*, you have spoken of exaggeration, but, now you are decidedly sinning that way yourself. Miss O'Connor is one of the most perfectly beautiful persons I have ever seen; and, in truth, it is not fair to compare her to Alphonsine."

"Far from that! I take good care not to compare them. Why should I? Alphonsine has her attraction, Miss Mary hers. Are there not people as rich and as happy with ten thousand francs a year as others with a hundred thousand?"

"Alphonsine and her brother are in no danger any longer of being exposed to that kind of happiness."

"I do not understand you."

"I know your uncle; his resolution is unchangeable; it is, then, at least twenty-five or thirty thousand francs a year that our children lose to-day."

"It is a misfortune—but what remedy for it?"

"None, assuredly, none whatever; what is done is done. But you will acknowledge, at least, that Miss O'Connor is not what people call a *godsend*."

"Louise, is it *you* I hear speaking so, *you* who so nobly replied to the last and most insulting words of my uncle?"

"Oh! Heaven, *mon ami*, I do not regret what I have done; I would do the same thing over again probably. But you can't prevent me from thinking that if disinterestedness and justice are fine sentiments, they are sometimes rather costly."

"That is just what I shall try to do—prevent you from *thinking*," replied M. De Morville affectionately. "You have told me yourself—and it is true—that your first impulse is always right. Why so? because you follow the noble teachings of your heart. Where is the good then in *thinking?* Thinking may spoil everything. I will not permit you then, Madame Louise," added M. De Morville with a pleasant smile, "to do any such thing as

thinking. Yes, I shall be tyrant enough to prevent you from regretting the *first* impulses of your heart, which are always so just, tender and true."

"If you can do so, *mon ami*, I will bless your tyranny. For, you are right; I have been, like yourself, shocked and offended both at your uncle's insulting expressions in our regard, and his injustice towards Miss O'Connor. Still, this moment, I have been almost blaming the poor thing for our children's disinheritance. What a strange thing is the human heart!"

"Certainly; but these contrasts, these inconsistencies, these sudden changes, in our manner of seeing and feeling, brought about by *thinking*, do no harm when we keep them to ourselves. We are acquainted with each other to our very innermost souls. But suppose that the unjust idea of blaming Miss Mary for the loss of the inheritance, had dropped from you in her presence. Only imagine, my dear Louise, what a painful blow it would prove for a heart so delicate and refined as hers must be!"

"It would have been detestable on my part."

"Yes, for Miss Mary should then find herself in this alternative, either to bear everything, to suffer everything in silence, or, to give up a situation that keeps her family alive."

"Poor girl! she is certainly much to be pitied."

"To me, you say, when regretting your hasty thought of a moment ago: *'what a strange thing is the human heart!'* and I understand you because I have known you for twenty years, and can appreciate you. But, frankly, my dear Louise, do you

think you could console Miss Mary, do you think you could heal a cruel wound merely by saying: *what a strange thing is the human heart?*"

"No, not all, she should be most painfully hurt and have good reason to be so. Ah! *mon ami*, what a misfortune that the letter to your brother was sent too late!"

"No, Louise; on the contrary, we must accept this apparent mischance as a blessing, thanks to which Alphonsine's education shall now be as highly perfected as it should otherwise have been left incomplete. I had yielded a little in spite of myself to your desire of having no governess in future, but I have confidence enough in your maternal love to be assured that you shall feel every day only more and more thankful for the timely arrival of Miss O'Connor."

"*Mon ami*, I fully acknowledge the truth of your observations. Besides, in justice to your brother, to my daughter, to myself, and, above all, to the young lady herself who is worthy of the deepest interest and esteem, it is only my duty to render her position as agreeable as possible. Only," added Madame De Morville, smiling, "I am quite decided on retaining one of my *conquests*."

"Which one?"

"Since the departure of Mademoiselle Lagrange, Alphonsine sleeps in a room near ours, instead of having a room in the third story near that of her governess. I am determined on keeping her there. I shall thus have her all to myself for a good hour both morning and evening. Incorrigible and insatiable mother that I am!"

"Just right! my dear Louise, and nothing more natural. Miss Mary, finding the custom already established, will not find it strange that Alphonsine does not sleep in a room near her governess's."

"But, now I think of it: it is near dinner hour, and I don't know if Madame Pivolet has yet commenced to get Miss Mary's room ready."

"I'll ring for Madame Pivolet," said M. De Morville, pulling the cord, "and I shall caution her once more to restrain her language and fancy with regard to Miss O'Connor. For, if she were allowed to explain as she pleased some of the unjust recriminations uttered by my uncle against Miss Mary, that insupportable Pivolet would soon manufacture stories quite as disagreeable as absurd."

"Fortunately, *mon ami*, such stories, so absurd, and particularly springing from a source so low, could never reach Miss O'Connor's ears. But you are perfectly right in speaking plainly to Madame Pivolet."

The housekeeper now entered the room with a lugubrious air; she set her wits to work to give herself the gloomy look of a prisoner just delivered from the *dungeons of the Bastille.*

"Madame Pivolet," asked her mistress, "have you thought of getting ready the bed chamber and the little parlor for Mademoiselle O'Connor?"

"For Mademoiselle O'Connor!" asked the housekeeper, like one just fallen from the clouds; "what, Madame? The bed chamber for Mademoiselle O'Connor?"

"Yes, for my daughter's governess," said Madame

De Morville with impatience. "You look as though you came from the other world."

"Madame, without coming from the other world, which I was very near going to a short time ago, exhausted as I was by starvation," said Madame Pivolet with an injured air, and throwing a glance of horror on the scene of her *incarceration*, "I may be well excused for not knowing that Mademoiselle has got a new governess, named Mademoiselle O'Connor. Sir and Madame, you both know very well that it is not my way to ask questions about what is not my own business."

"I request you, then, to persist in that reserve and discretion," said M. De Morville, in a severe tone, "for, mind, I repeat it, if you take the notion of making Mademoiselle O'Connor the text of any of your ridiculous stories (and I warn you that I shall be on the look out), you shall not remain twenty-four hours here. It is very painful to me to return to this subject, for I know your attachment to us and your scrupulous honesty; accordingly I hope you shall not put me under the hard necessity of acting with rigor."

"Monsieur can be assured that I shall strictly conform to his orders," replied the housekeeper, in a tone of deep compunction. "I confess my faults, and only ask from Monsieur and Madame the time and the opportunity to repair them."

"That's right, Madame Pivolet," said Madame De Morville; "you will then inform Juliette that she is to attend on Miss Mary."

"Yes, Madame."

"Go now, and get Mademoiselle O'Connor's

room ready. See that a good fire is lit there, for it has been vacant for some time, and this evening the air is damp and very chilly."

"Madame's orders shall be executed. Of course, Mademoiselle Alphonsine's bed is to be made in the second room, as in Mademoiselle Lagrange's time?"

"No. My daughter shall remain as she is."

"All right, Madame."

"Don't forget, either, to leave in Miss Mary's room a teapot and a tea caddy. She is English, and of course she is in the habit of often taking tea."

"Monsieur and Madame can rest assured that all their orders shall be executed," replied Madame Pivolet, with the sweetest air imaginable; and she went out, leaving her master and mistress completely convinced of her repentance, and of her kind intentions towards Miss Mary.

But she was all the time only contriving in her fertile imagination the cunningest kind of a plot against the *Belle Anglaise*, as she called her. She first went to the laundry, opened the presses, selected a pair of fine sheets, then another pair, the coarsest and roughest she could find in the servant's drawer, took the bundle under her arm, and proceeded towards the new governess's room, saying to herself:

"These sheets are only too good for you, my *Belle Anglaise!* If you complain (but that you won't do, you look a little too proud for it), I'll just say that Juliette made a mistake about the sheets. That ugly whiner, Lagrange, often had no better. Ah! my fair ladies, you come here to have the first place in

the house after the owners, and to shove me down to the second. Ah! you eat in the dining-room, while I, the housekeeper for fifteen years, and as good as any of you, have to eat in the servant's hall. Ah! you come to monopolize my Alphonsine that I have nourished at my breast, and you think that old Pivolet, who is no fool, will quietly endure it? Not at all! It shall go very hard with me indeed, if, after having packed off by my little attentions our first governess—though, to do her justice, I had little fault to find with her, she was too ugly to be jealous of—I don't succeed in ridding the house of the second, *the adventuress*, according to the expression of honest M. De Botardière, who can't bear her, and has already quarrelled with master and missis on her account. Didn't he go off furious! 'Baptiste,' says he, 'I'll never set foot again in this house.' And he jumped into the gig and gave Ronceval such a cut that the old beast started off as fast as his legs could carry him. Now, if M. De Botardière never sets foot here again, of course he will disinherit master and missis, and consequently my little Alphonsine—merciful goodness! and my *Belle Anglaise*, do you think *that* shall be the end of it? Not while I am around! To work then! and to begin this very evening!"

So saying, the housekeeper proceeded to the room that had been formerly occupied by her young mistress, and which was near the governess's. These two apartments, separated by a neat little parlor, were comfortably furnished, but not having been inhabited for a long time, and the month having been cold and wet, they were now extremely chilly and

damp. To increase this inconvenience as much as possible, Madame Pivolet opened the two windows of Alphonsine's old room and gave free admission to the cold mist of the rainy evening. Then she made the bed with the coarse sheets, lit no fire in the grate, took care *not* to put on the table the teapot and the tea caddy that she had brought, but she made sure that the candlesticks had candles. Then comtemplating with grim satisfaction this cold, cheerless chamber, which the melancholy autumn wind was blowing through, she said to herself:

"Nothing venture nothing win! If I can succeed in making my *Belle Anglaise* take this room for her own, she shall have good reason not to forget her first night at the Château Morville in a hurry. But I must not get myself into danger. Madame or Mademoiselle Alphonsine will be sure to come and see if I have executed their orders."

Then Madame Pivolet, with a cunning quite diabolical, going to the chamber really intended for the governess, put fine sheets on the bed, made a good fire in the grate, carefully closed the windows and drew the curtains, set the teapot and the tea caddy where they could easily be seen, and, in short, strictly executed *in this room* all the orders she had received.

Madame De Morville soon came in to make sure by her own eyes that Miss Mary should find her room nice and comfortable when retiring.

"I have preferred to take charge of this myself, Madame," said the housekeeper to her mistress, "so as to be certain that nothing was forgotten."

"That's a service, Madame Pivolet, for which I

am very thankful to you," said Madame De Morville, quitting the room.

Madame Pivolet waited a moment, then, locking the door and putting the key in her pocket, she crossed the little parlor which separated the two bedrooms, and led out into a long corridor lit on one side by several windows on hinges. Two of these she opened and left swinging, rightly calculating that the wind would soon break some panes of glass.—These dark preparations being completed, she went to dinner, and waited with much anxiety for the moment when Mademoiselle O'Connor would go to her room. When it was tea time, knowing that her master and mistress would retire soon, the housekeeper took a lighted candle and placed herself in the billiard room through which Miss Mary was to pass on the way to her chamber. She indulged half a hope that the governess would be alone, a thing however very unlikely, for Madame De Morville, or at least her daughter, would be likely, the first night particularly, to accompany Miss Mary to her room, as much out of consideration for her as to show her the way.

In some perplexity then, but with unflinching courage, the wicked old Pivolet stood waiting in the room, a large cloak provided against accidents in one hand and the lighted candle in the other. The door of the drawing-room soon opened, and she heard her mistress addressing Miss Mary:

"Since you absolutely refuse my company as far as your room, Mademoiselle Alphonsine will take my place."

As the young girl came out with her governess, the latter said:

"Do not give yourself this trouble, Mademoiselle, I beg of you."

"Excuse me, Mademoiselle, but I must in the first place show you where your room is, and then I want to see that everything there is all right, though Mamma has been there this evening."

"But you see it is useless to disturb yourself, since your mother has been so kind as to see to it already."

"But, Miss Mary, you have been several hours in my room and I have not seen yours yet."

"Mademoiselle," said Madame Pivolet to Alphonsine, "you'd better put on this cloak."

"What! a cloak to go up there? What do you mean?"

"Mademoiselle, I don't know who has left two windows of the corridor open, but the storm has broken all the glass, and the wind and rain are beating into the passage. You might catch a bad cold."

"Decidedly, Mademoiselle Alphonsine," said Miss Mary, smiling, "I must act my part of schoolmistress at once and forbid your coming any farther."

"Oh! Miss Mary, if you only knew how much nurse exaggerates in everything she says!"

"I assure you, Mademoiselle, that I don't exaggerate now," said the housekeeper, seized with a fit of shivering. "I have just come from the corridor and I'm frozen. Think how it would be with you and your delicate chest."

"My delicate chest! Why, Pivolet, you are dreaming!"

"Mademoiselle," said the housekeeper, addressing herself respectfully to Miss Mary, "you will have the kindness to forbid Mademoiselle Alphonsine to accompany you to your chamber. It is very warm in the drawing-room, and the cold current of air in the passage might give her a severe chill."

"My dear Alphonsine," said Miss Mary with a voice really irresistible, "I no longer order, I beg it of you as a favor, not to insist further on accompanying me."

Alphonsine, fearing to be considered troublesome, yielded, though with regret, to Miss Mary's desire, and said:—

"Well, then, Mademoiselle, at least take this cloak, since, according to nurse, the corridor is such a terrible place."

"I will take it then," said Miss Mary, smiling, and while the housekeeper busied herself putting it on her shoulders, she took Alphonsine's hand affectionately, saying: "Good night, till to-morrow!"

"Oh! till to-morrow very early!" replied Alphonsine. "You shall see, Mademoiselle, that I am no sluggard."

Then she added with a sigh:

"Miss Mary, I'm not a going to close an eye all night."

"Why not?"

"Oh! I shall be thinking on the severe examination I have to undergo to-morrow."

"I don't think you have much to fear on that head."

"Oh! don't think that it is about myself I'm uneasy. Gracious! no, for it does not seem to me that it is *I* that am to stand the test to-morrow."

"Who then?"

"Won't it be, to a certain point, my poor old governess, Mademoiselle Lagrange, who has taught me all I know and whom I loved so dearly. There! I've said it, Miss Mary, So to-morrow when I shall do my best to pass off well, I shall think on her all the time, and it is for her sake that I shall take pleasure in your praise if I deserve it."

Miss O'Connor was almost moved to tears at the delicacy of this sentiment so artlessly expressed, and said to the young girl:

"I can assure you beforehand that I shall be as much pleased with you as with Mademoiselle Lagrange. Good night once more."

"Let me go with you as far as the lobby, Miss Mary."

"Yes, but no farther."

"Won't you allow me to send you one of Mamma's chamber maids?"

"No; many thanks. I am accustomed to wait on myself."

"In all cases, please tell Madame Pivolet, if you want anything."

"Certainly, Mademoiselle," said Miss Mary.

Thus speaking, the two young girls, preceded by the housekeeper, who bore the light, passed through several rooms, and arrived at last at the lobby, where the temperature was quite cold.

"Quick, quick, go back," said Miss O'Connor

to Alphonsine, preventing her from passing the doorway.

"Good night, then, Miss Mary," said Alphonsine, departing, "a very good night! To-morrow, early, I shall be waiting for you in the study-room."

"Till to-morrow, Mademoiselle Alphonsine," said Miss Mary, "I shall join you at an early hour."

Then, following the housekeeper, she ascended a long and wide staircase and came to the corridor, where, true enough, the rain was coming in through the broken windows.

The housekeeper then, entering the little parlor that separated the two bed-rooms, and giving the light to Miss Mary, pointed to the door of one of them, saying:—

"There's your room, Mademoiselle;" then, pointing to the other, "and there is the room Mademoiselle Alphonsine occupied when Mademoiselle Lagrange, her other governess, was here; but it seems that Madame is not willing that her daughter should sleep there *now*.—Madame prefers to keep her daughter near herself." And again strangely emphasizing the word, which she repeated a second time—"*Now*, Madame must, of course, have her reasons for it. I have the honor of wishing Mademoiselle a very good night," added the housekeeper, with a deep curtsey; and then she departed, saying to herself:—

"If she complains of her room to-morrow, I will say that she made a mistake, and took one room for the other. But, no matter, the longest day of her life she shall remember her first night at Château

Morville, my *Belle Anglaise* that got me flung into the dungeon."

As she went off, she shut, as if by chance, the door of the little parlor. Miss Mary, candlestick in hand, went to the door designated by the housekeeper, opened it, and entered the room; but the windows having been left open by the cunning Pivolet, a sudden gust of wind blew out the light, and Miss Mary suddenly found herself in pitchy darkness, with the rain, driven by the wind, beating on her face.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST EXPERIENCES AND FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

THE chamber in which Miss Mary found herself was, as we have said, dark as pitch; the open windows gave admission at rare intervals to uncertain glimmerings breaking out here and there through the heavy rain-clouds that moved along the autumn sky.

The first idea of the young governess was to turn back and reach the door of the corridor through which she had come; but, as before mentioned, the cunning housekeeper, with wicked foresight, had shut this door which had a spring catch, and when Miss Mary had at last succeeded in opening it, the housekeeper was gone and she could not follow her as she did not know the way.

She dared not call: the court-yard on which her windows opened was deserted: so she had no resource left but to make the best of her disagreeable position. She groped about until she could recognize the principal articles of furniture in her strange room, closed the windows, and then throwing herself on her knees she prayed long and fervently, earnestly inploring heaven to assist her in accomplishing the long task of self-denial and exile that had just begun so doubtfully. Then sending in thought a last good night to those she loved, she

sought what rest she could obtain in the coarse, wiry sheets with which Madame Pivolet had provided her bed.

Five o'clock had just sounded from the château turret, and the day commenced to break. Mary arose and found her trunk in the little parlor: then taking out her little writing desk, and wrapping herself up as well as she could in her cloak, she commenced to write, shivering with cold, and having no more light than that afforded by the gray dawn of a gloomy morning.

It was not to Dublin that her first letter dated from the Château Morville was directed. It has been already mentioned that, after finishing the greater part of her journey, she had written an account of it to her mother. The following letter was the fulfilment of a promise she had made to Captain O'Reilly who was then quartered in Cabool, fighting the Afghans.

"My Dear Henry,—

"I write to you from France,—from the Château Morville—where I shall probably pass several years of my life. When I wrote to you last, announcing the ruin of my family and the destruction of our hopes, I told you that as soon as my lot was decided I would write again. I do so with pleasure now, because I think that by letting you know all the truth I can inspire you with more courage. Yes, my dear Henry, when I tell you that I am not so unhappy as you may have dreaded, I give you the opportunity of telling me in return about your prospects, for, in short, though we can never more

expect to enjoy happiness in each other's society, surely, with Heaven's blessing, we may well promise ourselves many a consolation.

"I am governess in the family of M. De Morville, residing ten or twelve leagues from Tours. M. De Morville is the brother of the French Consul at Dublin, and I have come provided with every necessary information and instruction, all of which I owe to the Consul's friendship for my father. My pupil, Alphonsine, is a charming young creature; if I'm not greatly mistaken, I shall have very little trouble in making something out of her fine natural endowments.—Her uncle in Dublin understands her well; still, I do not accept all that he told me one day with a pleasant laugh: 'Of all my brother's household,' he repeated, 'your pupil, Alphonsine, is, perhaps, the very one that stands least in need of an instructor.' In this criticism there must have been more wit than justice.

"M. De Morville is a man remarkable, first of all, for a charming politeness and the best manners; but, though still young—that is, not quite forty-five—his features are not without a slight trace of suffering. Very often, as the Consul, who loves him most tenderly, told me, he is subject to the keenest and most agonizing attacks of pain from old wounds that he received in the Spanish wars, and in several duels—in which, however, he had been obliged to take part against his own better judgment. The bad state of his health often compels him to keep to his room where, being somewhat devoted to scientific pursuits, he tries to amuse himself with his books. At such times, his only trouble, his only fear, is that of

dispiriting the other members of his family and thus preventing them from participating in the few amusements that now and then cheer up the dulness of provincial life. It is impossible, you will confess, to have a more amiable fault. Still his brother almost blames him for this extreme self-denial. In consequence of thus forcing, as it were, his wife to go without him into the world in search of its rather frivolous distractions, the Consul fears that his brother must often lead an isolated, sad, and gloomy life.

"Madame De Morville is no more than thirty-nine. It is only from her children you can tell her age, for her lively, buxom face, and the freshness of her complexion arising from a slight stoutness, give her a charm of second youth that renders her still very agreeable to look upon. Besides, her disposition is frank, her spirits are good, and she knows how to make the most of her education, the imperfection of which, her knowledge of the world and her charming manners almost succeed in concealing. Perhaps, dear Henry, *you* might consider that she wants a little of that gravity which is so becoming in a matron; you were always such a critic, you know; as for me, I can pardon her anything.

"The last member of the family is a son, M. Gérard, at present off at school, and to be so for another year. His uncle, the Consul, loves and esteems him almost as much as his charming niece.

"You see, dear Henry, how likely I am, in the midst of such worthy persons, to pass a quiet, peaceable existence, and to enjoy without any trouble the invaluable blessing of being able to afford some relief to my dear family.

"I give you all these details, because I am convinced they shall contribute to lighten the gloom caused by the tidings conveyed in my last letter; however I wished to announce to you myself the breaking off of our engagement, because nobody else could have done it in a less painful manner. But I dread your reply; I am afraid of your sorrow. So, before receiving it, I hasten to send you news at least a little more encouraging than the last. When reading your answer, I can say to myself: 'He is not quite so miserable just now as he was when writing these lines.'

"The daily routine of my duties, the thought that I shall send to Dublin every month, to the humble dwelling where my father, mother, and four sisters are living together, a letter that shall be read in common, and which will always contain a little remittance to help father's modest salary, all this, dear Henry, shall soften for me, and I trust also for you, all grief for disappointed hopes. Thanks be to God, the past is completely ours; in recalling it we recall nothing but pure, unalloyed pleasure. I remember, and a misty happiness overshadows me at the thought, how kind and good you were always to me, and how even when a child I loved you with an affection mingled with respect and confidence. Don't you remember how you used to make me forget the mischief I had done, by congratulating me on whatever little good I had succeeded in accomplishing?

"If I can to-day without too many scruples, take upon myself the responsibility of educating a human

being, it is to you that I owe it. Whatever progress I may have made either in self-knowledge or in sciences, arts, or accomplishments, I owe it all to my desire of pleasing *you*. When you took my hand and said, with your deep, grave voice, 'Mary, I am satisfied,' I thought I was sufficiently rewarded for all my trouble, and yet you were all the time only preparing for me a reward still more delightful—that of being able to return to my dear, dear parents a small part of what they have done for me. Thank you from my heart, dear Henry. Excuse me for thinking of this now for the first time—it only makes me think of yourself still more tenderly and respectfully. You see how unreservedly I reveal the state of my heart!

"Though projects formed so many years ago are now become impossible, still I cannot say to you, '*Forget me, let us love no more!*' What has been for me an enchanting dream, what has been—why hesitate to say it?—a deep and tender love which the duties of wife were to render only more chastened and holy, now becomes by the decrees of Heaven nothing more than a lively and sincere sisterly affection. Why then forget each other? Shall I cease to have pleasure in hearing of your successes, your advancement, of everything which may render you more happy and me more proud? Encourage me then, dear friend, in the new path into which Providence has conducted me, and some day perhaps, if ever we meet again, you shall, as of old, once more take my hand and say, 'Mary, I am satisfied.'

"Good-bye, dear Henry. I am, and shall ever remain, your sincere and affectionate friend,

"MARY O'CONNOR."

While writing this letter she had become almost frozen. She had often interrupted her task involuntarily, and, throwing her eyes around the bleak and dreary room, shuddered at the contrast, as she vividly recalled in her mind's eye

"The sad, strange days, the days that are no more!"

Oftener still she had dropped her pen to dry her tears, at such times ceasing to write altogether, and trying to summon up courage, in order that her letter should reveal none of her sorrow to Henry. Eight o'clock struck. She kissed the letter and commenced to fold it.

She looked at the paper awhile and thought how it was soon to be opened by a hand she could never clasp again. A tear fell on it, and she tried to efface the mark, dreading lest this mute witness might reveal the grief she had endeavored to conceal. She was disturbed in her bitter reflections by a sudden noise. The door on the corridor opened, then a light step was heard in the little parlor, but proceeding in a direction different from that leading to the room which she occupied. She heard a door open, then an exclamation of astonishment.—Very much surprised, she rose to open the door, and perceived Alphonsine standing in the door-way of the room where had been made all the preparations ordered by Madame De Morville.

"But, Miss Mary," exclaimed Alphonsine, "where have you passed the night?"

"Here," said the governess, turning and pointing to her room.

"Oh! my heaven, is it possible? Have I the sight of my eyes?" exclaimed a third voice, that of Madame Pivolet, who had unlocked the room two or three hours before and now, eager to enjoy the sight of her handiwork, appeared at the passage door. "I am confounded, overwhelmed! Mademoiselle in that chamber!—There must be magic in it. It must be a trick of the old serpent! Such things occur."

"I don't know what you mean by such language," said Alphonsine impatiently, "but it is inconceivable, it is shocking to think that Miss Mary passed the night in a room where no preparation had been made for her reception."

"I mean, Mademoiselle Alphonsine, that I don't know whether it is asleep or awake I am this moment," said the housekeeper. "I must pinch myself to know if I'm awake. Oh! I must be dreaming. Perhaps I'm a somnambulist!"

"Pivolet, you are intolerable!"

"What, Mademoiselle, you won't permit me to express my astonishment at finding this poor dear young lady in a room that is not hers! Only think, there was nothing, absolutely nothing in it, no candles, no fire, and I even remember the windows were wide open in the terrible rain and wind. Ah! the poor dear young lady! She must have been awfully cold. I don't know if she even had sheets for the bed. Oh, yes, I recollect, a few days ago they put sheets on it, but they were new and coarse,

yes, as coarse as a rasp! Ah! the poor dear young lady! what a terrible night indeed she must have had of it."

"I did not sleep much, that's true," said the governess, smiling.

"Oh! Miss Mary, will you ever, can you ever excuse me?" said Alphonsine in a touching voice, taking her governess's hands. "What must you have thought of mother and me!—But I implore you, don't imagine that we could possibly have been regardless of your comfort to such a degree as that. But," she added, turning to the housekeeper, "now I recollect, it is you that undertook to conduct Miss Mary to her room. How does it happen——?"

"Hah! Mademoiselle," interrupted the housekeeper so suddenly that she startled the two young girls, "I have it! Yes—it is all clear! It flashes through me like lightning! It is as plain as the noon-day sun!"

"My gracious! Pivolet, how detestable you are with your cries and your frantic exaggerations!" said Alphonsine. "But explain yourself simply and sincerely, I warn you. My mother shall be very deeply irritated if she learns that it was through your negligence Miss Mary has passed such a miserable night."

"Oh! let us speak no more of it, my dear Alphonsine," said the governess. "There has been some misunderstanding about the room I was to occupy, that's all. Not one word about this little mishap of mine to Madame De Morville. I should regret very much to be the cause of bringing the least reproach on your excellent nurse."

"And as for me, Mademoiselle," cried the housekeeper, "I can wash my hands of the matter; I am as innocent as the child unborn; I am as white as a swan in the affair. I don't want to labor under any imputation. I won't have any slur cast on my way of doing my duty. I would prefer death; yes, I would wade through human gore sooner."

"Pivolet, it is before mother that you have to clear yourself."

"And I shall reply like Bayard: without fear and without reproach, Mademoiselle. Listen, here's what happened. Now mind. I entered the room with Mademoiselle. I had the light in my hand, and, of course, I stood right facing her. Then says I, 'There is your room, Mademoiselle, on the left.' Mademoiselle thought I was speaking of *her* left, while I was speaking of *my* left. That it's quite clear, ain't it? A baby can understand that. So Mademoiselle instead of going to the door on *my* left—that is on *her* left—no, on her right—that is, yes, on her left—no, rather on my right, naturally enough went into the wrong room, *Voilà!*"

"It is explained very clearly," said the governess, smiling. "I just took one door for another. So, I repeat, my dear Alphonsine, I would be very sorry if any dulness of mine should cause the least trouble to Madame Pivolet. Let us not say one word to Madame De Morville about this *terrible night.* Let us go down to the study room and get through your examination. I promise I can listen as attentively and discover your mistakes as mercilessly as if I had had the best sleep imaginable."

Thus saying, she gently led off her pupil through

the long corridor. The housekeeper, seeing her depart, muttered between her teeth:

"Ah! you don't complain, *ma Belle Anglaise!* You're a proud one, eh! You have patience, have you! Very good! But you're not at the end of your string yet!"

END OF PART FIRST.

PART II.

LIFE AT THE CHÂTEAU.

CHAPTER I.

SORCERY.—CORRESPONDENCE.

It is now more than six months since Miss O'Connor's arrival at the Château Morville.

Alphonsine's father is seated, with a thoughtful air, in a little sitting room, waiting for the breakfast hour. The suffering expression so habitual to his countenance, otherwise so frank, has become complicated by a kind of constraint whenever he is in the presence of his family. Just now alone, and not undergoing this constraint (it is in one of those rare moments that we present him to the reader), M. De Morville seems profoundly melancholy. He turns over the leaves of an album mechanically, murmuring broken expressions in a tone of intense bitterness:

"Is it possible? At forty-five! me, the father of a family! me, still, in spite of everything, a man of feeling and of honor—certainly, and, please Heaven, I shall always continue so—yes, that's it, honor—fortunately, I can answer for myself there—that's my strong point."

Then shrugging his shoulders impatiently, he went on: "Answer for myself! What ridiculous pretension! Three months ago, could I restrain my indignation, or rather my ridicule, if any one had said that to-day, at my age—Ah! I'm either very

guilty or very foolish; yes, foolish probably, but how guilty? Shall not my secret remain buried forever in the darkest depths of my heart? Ah! I would die of shame if my wife or daughter, or, worst of all, Miss Mary, should ever discover it. No, no. Oh! that would be the most terrible punishment Heaven could inflict on me. Punishment! But, Great Providence! what have I done? What is my crime? Is it my fault if I see, hear, admire, and am grateful? Is it my fault if a terrible fatality exposes me every moment to this dangerous intimacy? Is it my fault if I notice the wonderful progress of my daughter, my adored daughter, in talents and in knowledge? If I see her disposition and her intelligence gain every day in grace, in elevation, in delicacy? Is it my fault if I see with wonder and delight my child's admirable qualities more and more developing themselves under an influence as enlightened and firm as it is mild and charming? And can I prevent myself from cherishing a lively and tender gratitude towards her who renders my paternal heart so proud and happy? Not at all, for the contrary would be odious ingratitude. Then I am neither guilty nor foolish. I am just. I need not then blush for my sentiments. I deceive myself, I exaggerate their tendency, that's all. Yes, thank God, it is only a father's heart that beats in my breast."

At this thought, the cloud that had darkened his features cleared away a little; but, soon relapsing into his despondency, he resumed with redoubled bitterness:

"But if my gratitude is paternal and sacred, how

is it that it weighs on me like remorse? Why this confusion, this reserve, this restraint in presence of my wife and daughter? Why these reveries, these involuntary distractions, which fortunately I can easily account for by the poor state of my health, the real weakness of which, however, my wife and daughter have never suspected, thanks to my precautions and my self-command? Why this increasing love of solitude? Gloomy solitude, which I seek that I may suffer unnoticed! And still I feel myself as loving, as devoted towards my wife as ever. Ah! what an abyss, a dark abyss is my heart!"

He was indulging in this melancholy strain of strange reflections, when, hearing his wife's voice as she entered the room, he started, arose, and endeavored to assume his usual air.

"I repeat, Madame Pivolet," said Madame De Morville to her housekeeper, who followed her, "I repeat that you have not common sense, and that such absurdities may lead to terrible results. I make M. De Morville judge."

"Oh, Madame, it is useless to tell M. De Morville such a—"

"On the contrary, it is useful. He will give you a good scolding for this new folly—one of the most absurd of them all!"

"What is the matter, my dear Louise?" asked M. De Morville.

"*Mon ami*, I was just now crossing the farm-yard, when all at once I saw Madame Pivolet engaged in a very animated debate with old Chênot."

"The old shepherd?"

"Yes. I heard him say to Madame Pivolet,

regarding her with respect and astonishment: 'so by this means the witchcraft that is on my poor old wife shall be broken?' 'Yes,' says Pivolet, 'and I'll answer for it with my head.'"

"Madame, I can explain——"

"Do me the favor to allow me to speak, Madame Pivolet; I want to inform M. De Morville of this new and dangerous folly of yours."

"Madame—excuse me—I heard my grandmother say——"

"Hold your tongue," said De Morville sternly.

"'What is it all about, Chênot?' said I to the old shepherd," resumed Madame De Morville. 'Oh! Madame,' he replied, 'only think, my poor old woman has been bedridden for nearly a year; she can't stir a peg; if she was tied down with cords, she could not be less capable of moving. I gave her the herbs which I give to my sick sheep, but they didn't seem to do her any good. Madame Pivolet has been just now asking me about her, and I told her that she had a sickness that nobody could understand, and that I could make nothing of it myself.'"

"Then says I to Daddy Chênot," interrupted Madame Pivolet, "yes, and I don't deny it, no, I don't, I declare it openly, I have the courage of a martyr, and would undergo a——"

"Stop this confounded nonsense!" exclaimed M. De Morville. "Either keep silent, or tell the story simply."

"Well, sir, here is all I said to the old shepherd —'Since old Mammy Chênot is sick of a disease that nobody understands, it is very likely somebody

has thrown a spell over her. There are malignant persons, who never appear in the affair, who don't even know you, and still who have the power of throwing a spell over you. These malignant persons are generally called witches.'"

"What!" cried M. De Morville, "you have been so foolish, or rather so wicked, as to put such ideas into the poor man's head."

"Wait, *mon ami*," said Madame De Morville, "wait till the end. Then you shall see to what bad results this new extravagance may lead."

"Truth, Madame," said the housekeeper, "excuse me for saying it, can never lead to bad results. I heard my old grandmother say that her mother had once seen a witch as wicked as she was beautiful, burnt at the stake. She used to go to meeting every Friday night, astride on a broomstick, so as to have the power of flinging terrible spells on the cattle and the poor country folks, in gratitude for which they roasted the hag at last, and, faith, they did well! In short, sir, even in the very country we're in, and you know it as well as I, sir (and it was like a flash of light to poor Daddy Chênot when he thought of it), there exists this very day, hard by the park, a sheet of water called the *Pond of the Shrieking Woman*, because they once dipped another witch there for her wicked doings, and they would not have let her off so easily but for her terrible screams and violent resistance, which frightened them. That's a historical fact, sir. So says I to Daddy Chênot—'Somebody must have thrown a spell over your wife. You have but one thing then to do. Take

a big toad during the full moon, tie its hind legs with seven sprigs of hemp, stick seven pins in its back in the form of a cross, put it on a red hot shovel and walk seven times around your cabin, each time crying out:—*Barrabas!* You may rely on it that this will break the charm, and that your old wife will be once more able to trot around like a rabbit. If it don't, it is because a spell of double power has been flung on her, and in that case we may try to do something else.' "

"Really, this creature is doing all she can to render herself more and more insupportable," cried M. De Morville, looking at his wife.

Then, turning to the housekeeper—

"Do you want to wear out my patience?—Do you absolutely require me to drive you from the house?"

"Drive me from the house, sir! Good gracious, why so? Is it because I have the good nature to wish to cure Mammy Chênot!"

"Leave the room!" exclaimed M. De Morville. "You are a miserable lunatic! Go this moment and tell Joseph to ride to the village for the Doctor. I shall acquaint him with your new extravagance, so that when he cures this poor woman he may at the same time also cure her husband of whatever wild follies you may have put into his head."

"Cure her! all his Latin won't do her a bit of good, whereas a good big toad——"

M. De Morville cut her short by pointing to the door with so imperious a gesture that she vanished in a moment.

"You are right," he observed to his wife, "there is nothing more dangerous than to spread such ab-

surdities through ignorant and credulous minds. Blind and brutal excesses may very easily be their result."

"Fortunately, you have taken an excellent means to put a stop to such extravagances. The Doctor will at once cure the poor woman and crush Pivolet's silly folly. But, come, *mon ami*, don't let the crazy thing affect you so. You look a little out of sorts!"

"Oh, it's nothing. That creature is continually disturbing me, and I don't know what prevents me from getting rid of her at once."

"With all her faults, she means well, and is very faithful. She adores Alphonsine, and our dear child would be very sorry if we sent her away. Let us trouble ourselves no longer about her, though for that matter," added Madame De Morville, smiling, "I must acknowledge that I'm a little like her myself. I too believe in witches!"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh! but in good witches! or, if you like it better, I believe in good genii, in good angels in human shape."

"In good angels in human shape?"

"Yes, Miss Mary, for instance—"

"Explain yourself, Louise."

"Well, isn't she a good angel in human shape? a regular sorceress? Hasn't she thrown a spell on me? From the jealous mother I was, hasn't she turned me into the most reasonable, the nicest little mother that you know? It is true; for ever since we have had the happiness of this sweet young girl's company, have you ever seen me, even once, show my-

self jealous in the least degree of Alphonsine's ever increasing affection for her? or ever, even once, on Alphonsine's account, jealous of Miss Mary's dazzling beauty? In a word, except a little attack of bad humor on account of the way your spiteful tyrant of an uncle received poor Alphonsine when she went to visit him on his birth-day, I ask,—except on this solitary occasion,—have you ever heard me make the least allusion to the loss of the inheritance?—No trifling loss, after all, for our children.—No, not once. No wonder then that I say, Miss Mary has bewitched me. She is the good angel of the house. I hardly know myself any longer. Her remarkable talents, which I was afraid I should envy, I only admire; I even love them, for Alphonsine profits by them wonderfully. Has not her progress every way been most extraordinary?"

"Oh! most extraordinary."

"How coldly you say that!"

"Oh! not at all."

"Oh! but you do though. And *à propos, mon ami*, I don't think you are quite just towards Miss Mary."

"I?"

"Yes, for some time past, you seem uneasy, even embarrassed, in her presence."

"Not in the least."

"Oh! I have good eyes. However charmingly she may draw, however enchantingly she may sing, it is only Alphonsine and myself that ever express our pleasure and offer our legitimate applause. You are away over in a corner, and when you have to say something you applaud as if you did not know what was going on."

"Because, my dear Louise, knowing Miss Mary's extreme modesty, I don't like to confuse her by my encomiums."

"She must think Alphonsine and me then very ill bred," replied Madame De Morville, laughing, "for we are never tired heaping on encomiums."

"You know, my dear, there is a certain difference between the praise given by a woman and that given by—a man."

"A man!" cried Madame De Morville, with a merry laugh. "Why, you are no man to Miss Mary. Can the father of a family be a man?"

M. De Morville reddened in spite of himself; he was trying to make out some reply, when Alphonsine entered the room with letters in her hand.

"The postman!" she cried merrily, as she distributed the letters. "One for you, Mamma. The postmark is Saint Cyr, probably from Madame De Noirfeuille. One for you, Papa, from Paris. Another from Paris—but this one I keep myself; it is from my amiable brother Gérard. Another for you, Papa, from Château Botardière, uncle of course expressing his regret at not being at home when I went to congratulate him on his birth-day. Lastly, this English letter is for Miss Mary. I'll run and take it to her. She is always so delighted at hearing from her family. Then I shall read my own letter. Dear, good Gérard, how I love him for having written to me!"

And Alphonsine ran off to complete her distribution of the mail.

M. De Morville opened the Botardière letter, saying to his wife:

"Let us see how this uncle of mine explains and excuses his cruel treatment of Alphonsine, who only did her duty in paying him a visit on his birth-day, the 19th of March."

He read as follows:

"NEPHEW,—

"I give you this title only because it is your birth-right; unfortunately I can't help your being my sister's son.

"I do not go to your house because I should be there exposed to—

"1st. *A Living insult*—the adventuress, who with her lovers, during that cursed journey, turned my gray hair and the noble name of Botardière into a constant subject for insolent laughter.

"2d. *Danger*—that rascal Robert, who by his reckless volleys frightened Ronceval, as I believe, with the malicious design of breaking my neck.

"Know then well, nephew, that when I quitted *your* house, I had no wish whatever that you or yours should ever come to *my* house. If you had come, I had given orders to refuse you admittance. It would have shown at least a little courage on *your* part to venture to encounter this refusal. But, instead of that, you sent your daughter (no doubt by this time completely corrupted by the adventuress) to wheedle me, under the pretext of paying me my birth-day visit on St. Joseph's day, but really and truly to smell a little after the legacy.

"I'll not conceal it; I tell you I'm disgusted with such mercenary attentions. The law provides the means of guarding against, and punishing too, such

manœuvring after rich relatives. Besides, I warn you that my will is made: this is how it commences:

"'I disinherit my nephew, Adolphe De Morville, his heirs and claimants, of every thing which the law permits me to keep from them, declaring beforehand that, if in a subsequent codicil I may happen to leave them anything, such a codicil must be null and void, as it must be the effect of such scheming operations as the Code classifies under the term *Undue Influence*.'

"N. B.—I also warn you that next vacation I positively forbid Gérard, whose poaching propensities I am too well acquainted with (like father, like son), to come to hunt on my grounds. My gamekeepers have received the severest orders on this subject. I don't understand the idea that, under the pretext of *nepotism*, people should insult my gray hair and kill my pheasants and rabbits besides.

"I am (much against my will) your uncle,

"EDWARD JOSEPH DE BOTARDIÈRE."

M. De Morville flung the letter on the table, saying:

"Fortunately, all that is too ridiculous to be really annoying. Let us hope that our other letters shall put the surly old gentleman out of our head."

They opened and read the other letters.—Madame De Morville having read hers, which was only a short note, waited, reflecting, until her husband had got through his. Then she approached him, saying:

"*Mon ami*, Alphonsine was right. This note is

from Madame De Noirfeuille, an invitation. They are to have at the end of the week a grand hunt, private theatricals, and a ball. Three whole days are to be devoted to the amusements."

"Well, then, Louise, you had better go."

"Without you?"

"You know that Spring is not very favorable to my constitution. So at this season I am always afraid of making any kind of change."

"Well dear, I'm decided. I shall never go into society without you again. It was all very well during poor Mademoiselle Lagrange's time, when I wanted to forget my jealousy. But now I'm so perfectly happy that I want no amusement."

"Louise, do you want to inflict on me the regret of depriving you of your favorite pleasure,—that of talking with your relations, friends and acquaintances, whom our absolute retirement must make very cold towards us, if it does not estrange them altogether? My dear wife, I assure you, you shall spare me much vexation by going to Madame De Noirfeuille's and joining in those amusements, in which I shall take my share afterwards by listening to your description."

"Listen, dear: since Mademoiselle Lagrange's departure, Alphonsine, as you know, sleeps in the room next to mine; every evening therefore, I enjoy her company, and thus by means of the good Miss Mary, for she has been my teacher at least as much as Alphonsine's, I am completely cured of my jealousy. So it would cost me too great an effort to separate myself from my daughter."

"It needn't be a separation of more than three

days. During your absence Alphonsine can occupy her old room near Miss Mary's"

"Indeed, I would rather not go,"

"Louise, let us guard against exaggeration. Six months ago, when you were unwilling to have a governess between yourself and your daughter any longer, I yielded to your wish, in spite of myself, for I was certain that the task you were going to impose on yourself was beyond your strength. Fortunately, Miss Mary came. During these six months you have not left your daughter a single day. Just now, society, where you are so much appreciated, reclaims you. Why refuse the invitation?"

"Do you want me to accept it then?" said Madame De Morville, laughing. "Take care! I can enjoy myself much, very much indeed, at Saint Cyr. You know how cordially we are always received there."

"For that very reason I ask you, and if necessary," said M. De Morville, smiling, "I even command you not to neglect this opportunity of amusing yourself."

"You do, really?"

"I require it."

"Well then, I must obey you, great tyrant. But what letter is that you have just read and with which you do not appear over satisfied?"

"It is pretty near bad news."

"What is it about?"

"A project of which we have often and for a long time been wishing the success."

"The marriage with young M. De Favrolle?"

"Yes, we must renounce it."

"That I should be sorry for. But what is the cause of the change?'

"Here, read."

Madame De Morville took the letter and looked at the signature with troubled eagerness; it was from M. De Favrolle, her husband's old colonel.

"Has any misfortune occurred in the family, *mon ami?*"

"No, thanks be to God, no. But read."

Madame De Morville read as follows:—

"DEAR OLD COMRADE:—

"You know I write neither often nor much at a time. The finest model of eloquence I have ever seen was the report of an officer who wrote in his paper the single word: NOTHING. But in spite of such rhetorical doctrines and my laziness, I am going to write you at least a page.

"You remember that castle in the air of ours so like those that old fogies of fathers are so fond of building? '*You have a son.*' '*You have a daughter.*' '*Let us marry them.*' '*All right!*'

"Well, my old comrade, I'm sorry to say *it is not all right.* This is the second time that this rascal son of mine disconcerts me completely. Formerly he did not wish to enter the army. Imitating his father, however, he might have done a worse thing than become an officer. However, at last I made up my mind that it would be better to keep my son at home. Besides, he was not lazy. He loved the arts. He sketched landscapes, human figures and what not. At such things he worked away from

morning till night, as happy and as merry as the poorest daub.—Now I liked all that. A year ago, he asked permission to go to Holland, to study six or eight months there with one of his friends. Nothing could be better. But on his return what a disappointment! May I be blessed if I don't think the Dutchman changed my son into somebody else! I recognize him no longer. No more laughing, no more talking, but from morning to night sketching women's heads, pretending to call them *Venus* and *Diana* and other classic divinities. I am wrong in saying *heads*, I should say *head*, or rather *face*, for he only draws one, eternally one, to-day full front, to-morrow profile, next day three-quarters, and so on. He's always at it. I can't say that it is an ugly face, far from it; but it has now got to be so that I can no longer bear the sight of it. Of course, he is dead in love—but with whom you will naturally ask, old comrade. On that point I can only say that one of his friends told me he seemed desperately smitten with his Professor's pretty daughter, while he was in Holland. I tried to talk with him on the subject, but I found him as mute as a drum with the head knocked out. I then tried to operate a diversion, by mentioning our project of marrying him to your daughter. A most miserable manœuvre, my old comrade! repulsed with dreadful loss! He entrenched himself behind a most positive refusal, not only impregnable but unapproachable.

"So, I have nothing for it but to tell you the whole story, and to let you dispose of your daughter as you think proper. Decidedly, she deserves some-

thing better than my madman!—There are times, sir, when I am angry enough to send him to old Nick, only I know that at heart he is the best poor fellow in the world; and, even in spite of myself, I must pity him, seeing him so gloomy and dejected. So you see, old boy, we must renounce the hope of becoming grandfathers on the same day. More is the pity, for it would have been an excellent joke to shake your hand and call you 'Grandpapa!'

"Adieu! I must like you very much, besides being confoundedly ashamed of that son of mine, to have spun you off such a long yarn.—If by chance you mention my name to your wife, tell her that I am her very humble servant. Give me your hand, and let me shake it like an old comrade of the Bidassoa.

"I saw our old general, Soult, the other day. He is breaking fast—the portfolio of war is too much for him. Ah! old friend, the Marshal of France is not the only one who finds his life, strength and spirits no longer what they were in 1814, when we struggled against the English in the wild gorges of the Pyrenees!"

"You see," said M. De Morville to his wife, "we must renounce this marriage, and I am very sorry for it."

"It is certainly very much to be regretted, *mon ami*. However, I am almost consoled when I reflect that, after a few interviews between M. De Favrolle's son and Alphonsine, we might find ourselves in a still worse position."

"How so?"

"Is it not quite possible that you might be obliged

to write to M. De Favrolle: 'Decidedly, my dear friend, my daughter does not much like your son, and as her happiness is the first question, I beg you will recall Théodore, and forget that we ever thought of the marriage.' Would you have preferred that the rupture should come from our side?"

"No," replied M. De Morville, reflecting; "and perhaps it is better that things are as they are."

Leaving Madame De Morville to console her husband for this mischance, we shall now follow Alphonsine to her room, where she is reading the letter of her brother Gérard, the young rhetorician in the college *Louis le Grand*, with whom we are not yet acquainted. The correspondence between the young people was an artless interchange of sentiments, and was confined to the narrow circle in which they moved, the one in the college—the other in the Château Morville.

* * * * *

"——Really, dear Alphonsine," wrote Gérard, "you make me envy your good spirits, you are amused with every thing. I could never imagine how the two years that separate our ages could ever bring about such a difference in our manner of seeing things. You are still a child, with a child's desires, while with me every day brings new thoughts and these thoughts take me far away from the college. In the midst of these insipid exercises, of these grand phrases copied from old authors which, I confess, inspire me with little enthusiasm, I am always thinking, almost in spite of myself, on my future career, and on the position which I am to hold in the world. There is something in me which grows every day

more and more discordant with what is said and what is done here. The sports I once used to delight in so wildly, are now tame and insipid. I pass my recreations all alone, except when from time to time, I take part in the serious discussions got up between some philosophy students. Next year I shall probably be a philosopher myself.

"How happy you must be, Alphonsine, with your Miss Mary, who makes your studies so pleasant! I can't find for my part, among our professors or masters, any one to be compared to her. I am quite curious to know her. Don't imagine, however, that I believe she corresponds a bit to *your* description. In your letters there is all the exaggeration of a little school girl enthusiastic about her mistress. You know nobody else, and for want of having seen the world, you give her all imaginable perfections. But I will judge all this for myself, and then we shall see!—You must try and prevail on father to take me away at the end of this year. It seems to me that under his direction and with the help of his library, I could study more advantageously at home than at college. And then you know how happy I should be to be once more with you all.

"Kiss Pa and Ma for me and give my regards to Pivolet. Is Uncle De Botardière still furious?

"P. S. You can no longer make fun of my hoarse voice that could neither go up nor down the scale: my music-master says I have a regular barytone, and that I could sing parts written for Tamburini."

Alphonsine paid little attention to the melancholy tinge already beginning to appear in her brother's

letters: she only began thinking what music she should order from Paris, overjoyed at the idea of singing once more with her brother Gérard.

We shall complete our knowledge of the Morville correspondence of this day, by going to Miss Mary's room.

She is seated at her writing desk, her forehead resting on her two hands. An open letter lies before her. As she reads it, bitter tears roll down her cheeks, which she hardly thinks of wiping away.

It comes from Henry O'Reilly, an officer of the Forty-second regiment, then fighting in Afghanistan. It had been sent to Dublin, having been written long before he received the letter Miss Mary had sent him the morning after her arrival at Château Morville. The contents were as follows:—

"My Dear Mary:—

"How painfully your letter has afflicted me! What! your honored father, my dear old friend, obliged to sell Clara Cottage, the scene of so many happy days, and to accept a clerkship to maintain his family! Just as he was approaching his time for tranquil repose, to think that the poor gentleman is forced to seek by such humble employment the means of sustaining the very existence of those he loves so well!

"I have been also deeply impressed by your determination to become a governess so as to be able to be of some assistance to your family. It is a noble thought. There I recognize your bold heart. Once more then I can say with all my soul: Dear Mary, I am satisfied; I am proud of you!

"However, you must permit me to speak to you with my usual sincerity. A governess's position, in any case, is a very delicate one, and it becomes infinitely more so, when she unites, as you do, charms of person with those of head and heart.

"God forbid that I should discourage you, my dear little girl; but I must tell you the truth. Relying on your steadiness, your rectitude, I signal you the rocks, sure that as soon as you know them you will avoid them. I don't know as yet who are the persons with whom you are to live: your next letter shall enlighten me on that point. But whoever they are, and without denying that they may be a rare and honorable exception, I must tell you beforehand, my dear Mary, what are *generally* the difficulties of the peculiar position in which a governess finds herself towards the family of which she has become a member. If I *color* things a little you can easily tell why.

"One of the dangers of your new position, which *you* will no doubt consider trifling, but which on the contrary, *I* consider very serious, is this:

"You will have to live between the jealousy of the servants and—if not exactly the disdain—at least the relative superiority of the masters. The servants, not understanding the value of your merits, will refuse to do you their little services because you have not the means of commanding them, that is to say, of paying for them. The masters, if they recognize your brilliant qualities at all, will make a display of them with pride, but without granting you a particle more of consideration. They will consider your salary payment enough.—But I am more afraid of the animosity of the servants. *Mean enemies are*

always the worst; and the worst of all humiliations are those proceeding from a source so much beneath us that we are obliged to bear them in silence rather than demean ourselves by appearing to notice them.

"Dignified without haughtiness, affectionate without familiarity, reserved without coldness, keep yourself strictly within the rigorous accomplishment of your duties. Isolate yourself prudently in the midst of the family. Your natural frankness and goodness of heart might make you, before the novelty was over, think yourself in your own house; and the correction of such a mistake might prove very bitter to such a heart as yours.

"This distrust is painful, I am well aware; it creates a sort of void around you, but it is necessary.

"In short, if, for the climax of your misery, you do not feel yourself filled with great affection for your pupil; if the pleasures of this intellectual maternity do not compensate you for the thousand vexations, perhaps the thousand bitter mortifications you may have to undergo: in such a case, my dear Mary, leave the house at once; your life would become insupportable.

"But there is another danger of which I must give you notice. Unless your pupil is an only child and her mother a widow, you are going to live on intimate terms with the members of perhaps a numerous family. You shall then be thrown into daily intercourse with the relatives of the young girl entrusted to your charge. It is not at all impossible but that some of the young men, speculating on your isolation in the middle of a crowd where you are always regarded as a stranger, will look on you as a prey,

easily captured on account of the neglect or weariness to which they will consider you abandoned. They will not trouble themselves to inquire if your faith is pledged, or if your heart is pure; they see that are you alone and without protection; they will persuade themselves that you are heartbroken with your condition; they will imagine they are doing a charitable work in proffering their infamous consolations; and there are some of them depraved enough and mean enough to calculate on your unwillingness to lose your poor situation as an effectual means of preventing any revelation on your part, of their disgraceful pursuits!

"Such may be the dangers of your new situation, my dearest Mary. I have not indeed hesitated to darken the picture, and for this reason:

"If you have the good fortune to meet with an honorable family, capable of appreciating you, my poor dear little girl, and there *are* many of such noble exceptions, your gratitude towards them will be the more lively as your apprehensions have been great.

"If, on the contrary, you are to be exposed to the intimacy of unworthy men, you will at least be made aware of the dangers that surround you, which your ignorance of the wicked ways of the world might otherwise have concealed from you, perhaps until the very day when your honest sensitive pride would encounter a stunning and most cruel blow.

"Now, dear Mary, a few words, if you please, on my own affairs. Of course, I am and I regard myself as much engaged to you to-day, when your family has met some misfortunes, as when Clara

Cottage, with all its luxuries and delights, was your happy home. Our marriage has been decided on by our parents; we have plighted our word. My resolution is unchanged and unchangeable, and so should yours be likewise. I honor my father too deeply to suppose for a moment that he sees any obstacle to our union. I have never found him otherwise than perfectly just and honorable in all things, and in my mind's eye I see him saying, and I drink in his words with delight: 'Henry, don't be slow in marrying the daughter of that honest man who has sacrificed his fortune to the claims of friendship and of honor. You should be proud, sir, of entering into such a noble family.'

"I cannot, however, return to Ireland before further promotion. I am told they're going to make a major of me in a short time, and I know they must do something of the kind without delay, as the Afghans have killed off nearly all our officers; indeed the Khyber Pass has almost annihilated our regiment. We are now on the march to Cabul. Whether we shall ever get there, or get back, or how this war is going to end, the Lord only knows. All *I* know is that the very first moment I obtain leave of absence after my promotion (you feel I cannot go sooner), I shall have the pleasure of being authorized by your father to escort you back to your own house.

"Indulge no longer, then, my darling Mary, in that false logic of yours, at which indeed I am very much surprised, knowing as I do the solidity of your judgment. Never imagine that an honorable man, engaged to an honorable woman whom he loves no

less tenderly than he is loved by her, can ever break his engagement under the miserable pretext that '*she is no longer rich.*'

"God bless you, my dearest Mary; I shall soon write again.

"Yours as ever,

"HENRY O'REILLY."

"Poor Henry!" thought the governess; "how great shall his surprise and joy be on receiving my letter, in which I tried to describe to him the excellent family among whom I have been living the last six months. How groundless he shall find his apprehensions. To increase his happiness I shall write to him this very day the following words:

"Be perfectly easy, my dear Henry; all the fond hopes of my first letter have been realized, even surpassed! I am surrounded here by the most tender attentions, the most delicate regards. Every one strives to make me forget that I am a stranger in the family. M. De Morville, his wife, and his daughter are towards me more like old friends, like kind relations, than anything else." "Only," added the governess with a sigh, "I cannot tell him that he has been completely mistaken. Alas! there was only too much truth in what he said about the animosity of the servants towards the poor governess! But, Henry, as well as all my other friends, must never know what bitter tears I am often forced to shed here in secret. Yes, *mean enemies are always the worst.* Low and groundless malice can at last render life insupportable, however quiet or happy it may appear on the surface."

CHAPTER II.

THE SECRET SUFFERER.—AN EVENING LESSON.

A FEW days after the date of the last chapter, Madame De Morville was to set out for St. Cyr, in answer to her friend's invitation. Madame De Noirfeuille belonged to an old and distinguished family; rich and fashionable, she was much sought after, and her château, beautifully situated on the Loire, not far from Tours, was usually filled, every spring and fall, with the best society of Paris and Touraine. Consequently such a visit always gave Madame De Morville much pleasure, and she invariably returned from it with improved health and spirits.

Miss Mary, Alphonsine, and her mother were seated in the dining-room waiting for breakfast, and as it was long after nine o'clock, they could not understand why M. De Morville had not yet made his appearance.

"At last, there's father," said Alphonsine, hearing his step on the stairs, and rising to meet him as he entered the room. He was very pale, and his eyes seemed sunken from suffering and red from recent tears.

"What ails you, dear husband?" asked Madame De Morville earnestly. "Have you been sick during the night?"

"I, Louise? Oh! no, thank God!" he replied,

trying to smile, and kissing his daughter's forehead. Then saluting Miss Mary in a friendly manner, he took his usual place at the table, in the midst of an unpleasant, uneasy silence.

"Why, what's the matter this morning?" he asked with forced good humor. "We are all silent, we look at each other——"

"The reason is, my dear husband," said Madame De Morville, "that we find you very much changed in your looks since last night."

"Oh!" said M. De Morville smiling, "I am no longer either very young or very strong, I see. I can't indulge in the least little dissipation over nights, without every body being able to see traces of it next morning. I must own up to a crime then, which I can no longer conceal. Yes, I will acknowledge that, lured by a most entertaining book, and desiring to write out some very striking extracts, I went to bed when it was very late, and then I was so restless that I could not sleep. In vain did I try this morning, by remaining in bed longer than usual, to efface the marks of my guilt, of my high treason against King Health."

No answer followed these words, as is the case often when people doubt the truth of what they hear. The silence was at last broken by Madame De Morville—

"*Mon ami*," said she, "I will not go this evening."

"Ah! Louise, that is too severe a punishment for an imprudence which I did not think was so culpable. What! my punishment is to be to deprive you of a pleasure?"

"I cannot bear to go away in the state of uneasiness I'm in about your health."

"Do you prefer to pain me by remaining? Besides, dear Louise, why go away in any state but a pleasant one? It is only ten o'clock now, and this evening, I promise you, you shall have no cause whatever to be uneasy. Any way, will you not leave behind you the most charming little nurse that patient ever dreamed of?"

And he smiled as he looked at his daughter, who came to throw her arms around his neck.

"Oh! mother, don't be uneasy," said Alphonsine, "I'll be responsible for him."

"I pronounce myself cured beforehand," said M. De Morville; "and so for your fee I will ask Miss Mary to let you off from your studies till dinner, my daughter; you can help mother in preparing for her journey."

This scene had been observed by Mary with an interest mingled with uneasiness regarding M. De Morville's health; for she too had been struck with the traces of suffering so evident in his features. But, towards the end of the meal, Madame De Morville allowed herself to be convinced by her husband's entreaties, and no change was made in the project of her departure, provided always that her husband's improvement, already commenced, would continue. Alphonsine accompanied her mother to her room to get ready.

Miss Mary (so she was now called by everybody), wishing to take advantage of whatever time she had for herself, went to enjoy a little walk in the park, thinking on the dear family at home, and of course

not forgetting her betrothed, that noble man, so tender and true, now battling with innumerable dangers at the other end of the world, and whom she was to see not before two or three years longer, perhaps never. As she was passing slowly along a hedge, she thought she heard a smothered cough, but, immersed in her reflections, she paid no attention to it, and continued her walk. At the end of the alley she turned and came back at the other side of the hedge: her light step on the thick grass made no noise, so that, without being heard, she now suddenly found herself in face of a circular recess, on one side of which was a marble bench. There, to her horror, she saw M. De Morville lying on his side and pressing to his mouth a handkerchief steeped in blood.

She was on the point of screaming, but M. De Morville, starting up, rushed towards her, and seized her by the arm, saying, almost in a whisper—

"Silence, for Heaven's sake!"

"But, you want relief, sir——"

"Call nobody!"

"Not even Madame De Morville?"

"From her particularly I wish to conceal what has happened."

"So then, sir, you deceived her when you said you were getting better?"

"For twenty years I have been so deceiving her," and he tottered back to the bench. Miss Mary made another movement towards the château; but, M. De Morville, giving her a suppliant glance, said with a feeble voice—"Don't leave me, I pray you."

Miss Mary, divided between fear and commisera-

tion, sat down beside M. De Morville, powerless to relieve him, and very much pained to see him suffer.

"How I must ask your pardon, Miss Mary!" said he, after a few moments' silence. "What an unpleasant sight I present to you! But, I feel that the crisis is near. Thanks be to God, it is no more than the periodical effect, at this time of the year, of a wound I received long ago, and which you see I have taken the notion of surviving. I hope you are beginning to recover a little from the agitation which I have occasioned you."

"Even if I could for a moment, sir, forget the kindness I meet with in your family, the sight of your sufferings might readily excuse my alarm. But, why do you continue to conceal from Madame De Morville an accident which may lead to such serious consequences?"

"I have been able so far to conceal from my wife and daughter these symptoms of a disease not dangerous in itself as I think, but at which the affection of those I love might easily take alarm. And then, you know, there is no more unpleasant position than that of a man who, after having wooed and won a woman's heart and hand, gives her in return incessant anxiety about a life that she thinks is incessantly in danger. Such selfishness was not in my nature. No, I have not had the courage to condemn a woman to endless uneasiness, and thus keep her far away from a world that amuses her and in which she is considered so great an acquisition. Just say, Miss Mary, what kind of a life should my wife and daughter's be beside an invalid's sofa?

Every morning to examine my features in order to know if a smile can be permitted in the house during the day! Oh, no! I could not impose such an existence as *that* on my family. Thanks then to my precautions, to my self-command, I have been able to spare them, so far, the knowledge of this melancholy secret. *You* have surprised it, Miss Mary, but I implore you not to reveal it. Your pity for a few transient moments of suffering might fill forever with alarm two hearts that are so tender and so devoted to me. To a load of grief don't add another of remorse."

"*Remorse* do you say, sir!"

"If the mystery of my retired life was discovered, would not the world, so strict in demanding the performance of duty (often as it may sneer at it), accuse Madame De Morville of heartless dissipation, of culpable indifference? My sufferings would be infinitely increased by the blame I should have drawn upon her. Accordingly, I beg of you once more, never to mention a syllable of this matter, since the consequences, as you see, might be extremely grave."

Where is the woman that could not fully appreciate the noble delicacy of such self-sacrifice? Miss Mary comprehended it all but too well, and M. De Morville saw the eyes of the young girl filled with tears.

"You pity me," said he, commanding his voice and trying to smile. "You are wrong to pity me, unless perhaps for the past; for, in future, if I stand in need of any help, I have now at least somebody

to apply to without alarming my family. So you promise to keep the secret, Miss Mary?"

"I do indeed, sir," said the governess, in a grave and feeling tone. "I promise until you authorize me, until you even order me, to inform Madame De Morville of this secret, though no one has a better right to know it than she, for your reserve towards her is almost an injustice."

"What do you say, Miss Mary?"

The governess listened a while, and then said:

"I hear Alphonsine's voice. She is looking for me."

"Please go and meet her at once, Miss Mary: let her not see me in this state of paleness and prostration. Don't be uneasy. This crisis has been painful, but it has relieved me. I assure you I feel much better now."

The governess, hearing her pupil approach, hastened to meet her, and led her away from the hedge.

M. De Morville spoke the truth. He experienced an immediate relief caused by the very violence of the crisis. His features resumed by degrees their usual tranquillity, and his wife, so uneasy in the morning, set out in the evening, completely re-assured.

When her carriage had disappeared at the turn of the avenue, M. De Morville embraced his daughter and retired to his room; and Alphonsine and her governess went to resume their ordinary occupations. That evening, Miss Mary was less attentive than usual to her pupil's questions: her ear was always on the stretch, and she dreaded every

moment to hear some alarming noise announce a return of M. De Morville's attack. This man, always so kind towards her, now suffering alone and in secret, for fear of troubling and alarming his family, inspired her with a commiseration almost filial. She thought of the loneliness in which he was going to live during Madame De Morville's absence, a loneliness that commenced the very evening of the day he had suffered so much, when he was still suffering perhaps, far from his daughter now so busy at her lessons, and thinking of nothing else.

So she all at once interrupted her pupil's studies by saying:

"Alphonsine, you said this morning to your mother, when, seeing your father so unwell, she was hesitating about going: 'Oh! mother, don't be uneasy, I'll be responsible for him.' It was a good thought, but why not put it into practice?"

"Oh! Heaven! Miss Mary," said Alphonsine anxiously to her governess, "can my father be seriously unwell?"

"Without being exactly unwell, he has been poorly enough these days past: your mother's departure deprives him of the few hours' intimate conversation he used to have with her every evening. Why don't you ask him if he would be pleased to allow you study in his room?"

"Would you permit it?"

"Most certainly, my dear child."

"What a splendid idea!" exclaimed the young girl joyfully. "But what will you do, Miss Mary?"

"I will accompany you, of course, and then our labors shall not be interrupted."

A few moments afterwards, a servant brought back M. De Morville's delighted acceptance of the offer made to him, and Alphonsine immediately proceeded to what she called her *moving out*, with all the eagerness and merriment peculiar to youth at a change of place. They were soon all comfortably installed in M. De Morville's library, the host at the fireside, his guests seated opposite each other at a little table covered with books, over which floated the softened light of a green-shaded lamp.

"Miss Mary," said M. De Morville with a smile, "of course I shall not trouble Alphonsine and get her scolded for inattention, so if you please I'll just take up the book with which I had intended to pass my evening. I will keep still and promise to be a very good boy, though at the same time," he added, taking his daughter's hand, "a very happy one to have you both so near me."

"Oh! father, what a delightful evening!" cried Alphonsine, fixing all her little things in order, and settling herself to work. Then she added:

"But my dear little father, we can't make that convention of perfect silence mutually binding. I have to ask Miss Mary the hard questions, you know."

"Certainly, my child. Ask away, you won't disturb me in the least."

But the governess, in order to amuse M. De Morville, preferred that her pupil should answer the hard questions herself, and accordingly drawing her along from deduction to deduction by ingenious questions, she gave her an opportunity of showing off to her father the pretty fair fund of learning that she had already acquired.

At first M. De Morville paid no attention to what was going on; but he was soon struck by some questions completely above the range of a young lady's ordinary studies: this was not the way in which himself had received his instruction; he listened with increasing interest. If Miss Mary questioned with skill, her pupil answered with precision, clearness, and to the point. Memory alone did not always suggest her replies; her sound, sagacious judgment was often called to bear upon the question under discussion.

M. De Morville, more and more interested, turned himself around in his great arm-chair, the better to gaze, in his joy and pride, at his child, whose progress had been so rapid and who expressed herself with so much correctness and intelligence. He contemplated her with a sort of calm ecstasy; she was neither beautiful nor even pretty, but her pure and fresh countenance was stamped with a serene frankness, an innocent happiness, delightful to behold, and fully as charming as beauty. In order to be readier in her replies to her governess, she had risen from her seat: her perfect figure revealed itself to advantage; her dark eyes, large and mild, flashed this evening more vividly and more gaily than usual; her complexion had become animated with a light carnation tinge; and whenever the question was decidedly puzzling, the young girl, by a movement of native grace, raised her eyes to the ceiling, at the same time flinging back from her forehead her long chestnut tresses, as if they had obstructed the free flow of her thoughts.

M. De Morville, absorbed in the contemplation of his daughter, forgot that painful constraint, bitter as remorse, which he had experienced for some time past in Miss Mary's presence. He listened eagerly to every question, trembling when it appeared too difficult, triumphing when the answer was found, and then turning to Miss Mary with a gesture full of paternal joy and gratitude.

Just then in came the housekeeper. She had not been informed of the getting up of the improvised little party, so her astonishment was not slight at seeing Miss Mary and Alphonsine installed in M. De Morville's library.

It was part of Madame Pivolet's avocations to attend to M. De Morville's rooms, and no one was surprised to see her cross the apartment slowly and enter the laboratory, a small room off the library, where M. De Morville spent much of his time in making scientific experiments.

When she had disappeared, Alphonsine, doubtful of her triumph, asked timidly of M. De Morville—

"Father, have I answered pretty well?"

"Wonderfully, my dear child, you have surpassed all my expectations."

"Oh! how glad I am," cried the poor child, throwing herself into Miss Mary's arms. "Ah! father," she continued, still clinging round her governess's neck, and turning towards him, her face blushing with happiness, "you don't know that if I have satisfied you it is to my dear Miss Mary that I owe it. It is so sweet to learn with her! She

makes you like everything, love everything, exercises, piano, drawing, history, geography, everything, in fact, even arithmetic! Just think—making you love arithmetic! But what of that! She can make you love whatever she likes. She can make you do whatever she likes. Still I defy her to prevent me from loving her!"

"Alphonsine," replied Mary, laughing, "it is not from me you have learned this flattery anyway."

"My daughter just says simply what we all think," said M. De Morville, speaking to Miss Mary for the first time.

He was about to continue when he heard some noise at the door of the laboratory.

"Who is there?" he demanded in surprise.

"It is Pivolet," replied Alphonsine, "did you not see her pass just now?"

"What are you doing there, Madame Pivolet?" he asked, turning towards the door.

"Sir," replied the housekeeper, making her appearance, loaded with some empty boxes which had come that day from Paris, "it is I. *I'm* attending to my duty, *I'm* doing my duty."

"Oh, you could have put that off till to-morrow."

"Sir," replied Madame Pivolet, in a solemn tone, "one never knows to-day what to-morrow may bring forth."

"What?" said M. De Morville, gaily, his spirits having been cheered up a little by the agreeable hour he had just passed, "what! a necromancer like you to utter such a sentence as that! Surely one that possesses all the secrets of magic should not be embarrassed by such a trifle as to-morrow!"

"How, Pivolet," exclaimed Alphonsine with a hearty laugh, "you, a necromancer? Why, that's splendid!"

"Your honored father has threatened me with exile, Mademoiselle, if I make use of magic receipts to break the charm which a malignant person has thrown over a poor man's wife," replied Madame Pivolet in a constrained and suffering tone. "Therefore, I cannot reply to your question. Exile is suspended over my head. I bow myself, I prostrate myself before it——"

"Only that the old shepherd's wife is rapidly recovering," said M. De Morville, "and that Chênot himself has at last seen the extravagance of your incantations, Madame Pivolet, I should not jest at all on such a subject. But when a folly is not dangerous I can look on it with indulgence."

"They that live shall see," said the housekeeper mysteriously. "Daddy Chênot's wife is not cured yet—far from it; but, as I do not want to expose myself to exile, I shall keep my mouth shut."

"There you are right, Madame Pivolet."

"I am born to obey and to be silent, sir, you to command and to speak: I bow to my fate," replied the housekeeper with a deep reverence to her master; then, casting a sly side glance at Miss Mary, she added: "They that live shall see. I return to my empty boxes. They that live shall see," and she vanished into the laboratory.

"Miss Mary," resumed M. De Morville, smiling, "Madame Pivolet made her appearance just in time to spare your blushes. She interrupted me just as I was commencing to speak. But, take courage, it will

be to your mother, if you permit me, that I shall write, informing her what a treasure we have found in you."

"Oh! father what a noble and charming idea!" said Alphonsine, embracing her governess, who returned her caresses with delight. "I am sure Miss Mary will not be displeased with such praise as that. Her father, mother, and dear little sisters, of whom she often speaks to me, shall be so happy to learn how much she is beloved here! If they often think on her, I assure you she is not ungrateful—she is always thinking on them. Sometimes I actually accuse Miss Mary of not being here at all, but away off in Ireland—her dear Ireland!—Then, father, you know, to prevent me from telling about her clandestine excursions, what does she do but take me along with her! My Heavens, yes, while you think us both seated quietly in our study-room, we are off wandering through *Green Erin*, as Miss Mary calls her dear old land. I can tell you ever so many things about the holy wells, the round towers, the old abbeys, and the good, brave, hospitable people. Our favorite English reading-book is a book of Irish poetry. Here are some beautiful lines that I still remember from yesterday's lesson."

And she immediately repeated for her father, who understood English very well, the following extract with much enthusiasm, yet with perfect correctness of pronunciation:—

* * * * * * *

"Her woods are tall and straight, grove rising over grove;
Trees flourish in her glens below, and on her heights above;
Oh! in heart and in soul I shall ever love
The fair hills of holy Ireland.

* * * * * * *

"But, oh! my lament is in bitterness outpoured,
To hear the Gaels are scattered by the Saxon sword,
Oh! wo of woes, to see a foreign spoiler horde
On the fair hills of holy Ireland.

* * * * * * *

"How I long, how I pine again to behold
The land that belongs to the brave Gael of old;
Far dearer to my heart than a gift of gems or gold
Are the fair hills of holy Ireland."

The feeling that the young girl threw into these words revealed so much of the noble goodness of her heart as well as of her perfect mastery over some of the difficulties of the English language, that her father could scarcely suppress his tears of delight.

"Ah! my child," said he, "if Miss Mary carries you off to her dear Ireland, it is because her heart is there. It is because in that noble country, so beautiful yet so unfortunate, she has left behind her a family that she so tenderly and devotedly loves."

Alphonsine again embraced her governess, and the two young girls remained a few moments in each other's arms, Miss Mary not uttering a word, but by a slight gesture seeming to disclaim M. De Morville's praise and to rid herself of a painful recollection.

A profound silence prevailed for a few seconds, during which Madame Pivolet entered from the neighboring chamber, and crossed the apartment without being seen, just like those mysterious personages in the play that we see passing at the back of the stage, but who are unperceived by the other actors.

Alphonsine was the first to break the silence, by saying to her father:

"By speaking to Miss Mary of her dear Ireland, I'm afraid I have made her melancholy."

"No, not at all, my dear child!" exclaimed the young Irish girl earnestly and trying to hide the tears starting in her eyes, "recollections of one's country and one's family are good for us."

"You are really in earnest, Miss Mary?" asked Alphonsine, smiling. "You are not angry with me? Well, prove it!"

"Oh, with all my heart—what must I do?"

"Grant me my usual reward—that is, if you are satisfied with me this evening—"

"That is for M. De Morville to say," said Miss Mary. "He has heard your answering, and I think his satisfaction will be quite as important as mine."

"I consider Alphonsine to deserve every possible reward," said M. De Morville. "But what *is* the reward?" he asked.

"When I have got through my lessons, and if Miss Mary is satisfied with me," replied Alphonsine, "to close the day, she always reads for me some favorite passage of hers, and to-day she promised to read me *Jocelyn's* farewell and departure."

"That makes me regret that I have sent Lamartine's works to be bound, and *Jocelyn* with the rest of them," said M. De Morville. "Only for that I should have had my reward as well as you, though, for that matter, I have no better claim for a reward than the happiness I have enjoyed here this evening."

"Ah! but I have taken the precaution, you see," said Alphonsine gaily, pulling a book out of her

workbasket. "I have brought a dear *Jocelyn* here, being fully determined on getting my promised reward," and she presented the volume to her governess, who, however, hesitated to take it.

"I ask it of you as a favor, Miss Mary;" said M. De Morville, "comply with Alphonsine's desire. Don't let the dear child go away sorry for having come to spend the evening in my company."

Miss Mary took the book and turned over the pages to find the passage alluded to.

"You remember, father," said Alphonsine, taking a little chair and seating herself between him and her governess, "*Jocelyn* has just learned that his sister is obliged to renounce a most desirable marriage: the little fortune of the family divided between two children, makes her dowry too small. But the noble brother, in order that his sister should have a decent dowry, declares to his mother that he wishes to become a priest and renounce the world. Only, you know he don't want to enter the seminary until his sister is married. His sole desire is to find in her happiness the reward of his self-sacrifice, of which himself alone knows the secret. We have just got through his sister's wedding, and I remember very well the concluding lines:

"Et je disais tout bas, dans mon cœur satisfait:
Ce bonheur est á moi, car c'est moi qui l'ai fait!"
(I kept saying to my heart as it fluttered glad applause:
This happiness is mine, 'tis I that am its cause!)

At these words, M. De Morville called to mind the many affecting points of resemblance between *Jocelyn's* position and Miss Mary's: for she too had abandoned her dear family in order to be able to afford it some relief in its necessities. He prepared

himself then to listen to the reading of the passage with redoubled interest, and scrupulously obeyed a little nod of Alphonsine's enjoining strict silence.

Miss Mary commenced reading, in a perfectly natural tone, the description of the last day the young man was ever to pass at his father's house, when the old familiar faces were never to be seen again, when everything, animate and inanimate, seemed to send him its last trembling adieu. The sweet, sad, silvery voice of the young Irish girl contributed wonderfully to the effect of the passage, and its melancholy character grew more and more intense as the poem went on to detail all those little acts of love, the last that were ever to pass between the young martyr and those he held dearest on earth, and which no doubt vividly recalled to her imagination that last terrible gloomy day she had herself passed in her poor parents' house in Dublin. Whenever they met, the poem went on to say, they did not dare to speak, for fear the altered sound of the voice should reveal the stifled grief, the breaking heart. They came and went; the mother and sister, not trusting themselves together, feverishly busied themselves in making preparations for the departure of the beloved son, the darling brother, whom they were never more to see; with every little thing that they put into his trunks, putting in as many loving thoughts and passionate blessings. They sat together at their last meal, but it was in vain they tried to eat, and talk, and keep up a good face; the burning tears *would* start, and the heart-drawn bursting sighs *would* be heard.

Poor Mary struggled courageously against her

emotion; she was afraid of appearing to recognize a personal allusion in the picture drawn by the great French poet; but the more reality her voice gave the sentiments, the more deeply the sentiments themselves, so analogous to her position, penetrated into her soul, and it required an extraordinary effort of self-command to restrain her tears.

M. De Morville and his daughter listened with the deepest interest to those splendid verses; Miss Mary, they felt, was the interpreter of genius, fully expressing its thoughts, regrets and sufferings.

Alphonsine, thrilled by the touching tones of her governess, soon shared in her emotion; her tears began to flow, and long before the sorrowing mother had taken her final leave of her noble son, the young girl laid her head, sobbing, in Miss Mary's lap, and even the eyes of M. De Morville himself were somewhat moistened.

The governess half shut the book, passed her hand through her pupil's long brown tresses, and seemed lost in a half pleasing, half sad revery. The silence was long and profound, but all three understood each other without uttering a single word.

Alphonsine, whose impressions were more fleeting, was the first to recover from her emotion, and pointing to the time-piece on the mantel, she exclaimed:

"Why, it's ten o'clock!"

"Already!" said M. De Morville, also much surprised.

"And I have still a long history lesson to study for to-morrow!" said Alphonsine.

"I will ask of Miss Mary to excuse you, my child," said her father, pressing his lips to her fore-

head, "and besides that, I have another favor to ask of you."

"What is it, sir?"

"Oh! Miss Mary, I have passed a delightful evening. How happy I should be if to-morrow would resemble it!"

"There is nothing easier, sir. We shall return, if you desire it."

"It is what we all desire," said Alphonsine joyfully.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart, Miss Mary!" said M. De Morville. "Many, many thanks."

He accompanied the two young girls to the door of the library with a beaming countenance; but when he found himself alone, he threw himself on an arm chair, covering his face in his hands and murmuring bitterly:

"My daughter, my good angel, has disappeared! Her sweet innocence blesses me no longer, no longer am I fortified by her chastening presence! Now that she has left me, my paternal love reels before the furious blast of this senseless passion. Oh! I am now left alone, and a prey to the recollections of this day—of this evening! Alone, alone! Ah! what endless woes surely await me should I ever betray the existence of my fatal secret!"

CHAPTER III.

EVERY-DAY LIFE.

DURING Madame De Morville's absence, Alphonsine's evening lessons were gone through regularly in her father's library; and these new relations redoubled the intimacy of these three personages of our story. In the presence of his daughter, *his good angel,* as he called her, M. De Morville, exclusively occupied by his sacred paternal love, would have never dared to sully, to degrade, his holy joys by permitting any bad thought to intrude upon them; but in his loneliness, when he had no longer to dread Alphonsine's or her governess's eyes, he surrendered himself up the more recklessly to his terrible passion, as he had kept it awhile under close restraint, and he now actually took a kind of bitter joy in contemplating the ravages it was making in his soul.

The governess was of too pure and elevated a nature, and she believed too implicitly in the sanctity of the Morville family, to have any suspicion of a passion that would have horrified her. Besides, nothing ever betrayed its existence, either in M. De Morville's looks, words, or actions. If, in spite of his constraint, always most respectful, in spite of his continual care to weigh, as it were, every word he uttered, there still escaped from him an expression of rather an affectionate character, Miss Mary could

attribute it naturally enough to the warmth of his paternal gratitude.

M. De Morville sometimes joined his daughter and her governess in their walks. Alphonsine, coming, going, running and skipping about with the wild gaiety of her sixteen years, often left her father and Miss Mary together *tête-à-tête*.

One day, M. De Morville, profiting by the momentary absence of Alphonsine, said to Miss Mary, talking of his wife:—

"When, still young, I left the army and thought of marrying, my only dream was of that state of existence where two hearts, united together by the bonds of happiness and duty, find everything within themselves and seldom demand any outside amusements. But that day-dream slipped from me almost with the first days of my marriage. My wife liked society, but it had little attractions for me; and another cause, as you are aware, Miss Mary, the desire of concealing the poor state of my health, did not permit me to join in exciting pleasures. At the end of a year, I saw that I should have to renounce forever the happy existence I had promised myself; still, I was too honorable a man and loved my wife too much to make my will her law. The only thing she was wrong in, was never to look at life as I looked at it: I made generous efforts to render my disposition more pliable; I was naturally quick tempered, very quick tempered."

"Of course, being of the *Botardière* blood, you know," said Miss Mary, with a wicked smile.

"Oh! I was not quite so impetuous as my terrible uncle," said M. De Morville, trying to laugh, and

rather surprised at not having been more successful in engaging the young girl's attention; "but I had a kind of hot blood which my high military rank had not helped to correct. Still, I imposed on myself an unalterable mildness of demeanor; the habit of command gave way to that of unwearied obedience. What shall I say? By the force of self restraint, I became at last such as you see me, Miss Mary. However, can it be in consequence of the violence done to my tastes, to my nature? I don't know; but one thing is certain: whenever I cease to be under the happy influence of my daughter's presence, I yield too often to fits of gloomy discouragement, and I dare no more speak to my wife of these moral attacks than of those physical ones to which I am also subject. Now you see, Miss Mary, how, with every reason to be happy, my life is too often an object of compassion."

The governess walked on beside her pupil's father without uttering a word in reply.

M. De Morville, uneasy at this silence, was the first to break it, saying in a tone of suppressed anxiety:

"Miss Mary, perhaps I abuse the attachment you have always testified for our family, by talking to you about these trifling troubles of mine. I should have rather thanked you for the happiness I enjoy every evening in my daughter's society and yours. I would be sorry to have saddened you by such unpleasant confidences, you that have so many reasons of your own to be saddened enough already."

And he stopped for a reply.

"Excuse me, sir, for my silence;" said Miss

Mary, still however continuing her walk; "if I did not answer you, it was because I was asking myself a question."

"What was it, Miss Mary?"

"Supposing Madame De Morville was here at my right hand, as you are at my left, and was listening to all your confidences, sir, I just asked myself what would she be likely to say on the matter?"

"I don't think I ever deserved—that I ever shall deserve a reproach from Madame De Morville."

"Just now, in speaking to me of your 'trifling troubles,'— trifling enough in truth,—excuse me for saying so, sir, since heaven has given you such a wife as Madame De Morville and such a daughter as Alphonsine—you were a little excited, or, rather, I should say, a little too much dejected. I thought I detected *tears* in your voice. But, I cannot help thinking that Madame De Morville has as good reason to shed tears on her part—yes, perhaps, as bitter tears as yours——'"

"What do you mean, Miss Mary?"

"You have alluded to those terrible attacks that made your retirement from the world so extremely painful: now if Madame De Morville, at the period of the first or second attack, had insisted and insisted until she had learned the whole truth that you have just confided to me now, do you think that she would not have received the revelation of this melancholy mystery with surprise and pain? Would she not have been perfectly justified in demanding the reason of your silence before her marriage? You had concealed nothing regarding your fortune from her family, yet to her, to her of all the world,

you had not said one word regarding a life of which you offered her the half!"

"But at that time, these attacks were only of rare occurrence, and had nothing alarming in them," said M. De Morville, thus turned away from the ideas into which he had suffered himself to be drawn. "Besides I wished to spare my wife every trouble and anxiety."

"And by what right, sir, do you thus render Madame De Morville almost a guilty woman, though unknown to herself?"

"A guilty woman?" exclaimed M. De Morville.

"Yes, sir, guilty! Those attentions that can relieve you, those distractions that can rid you of this discouragement, is it not from Madame De Morville that you have a right to demand them? When at *your instigation* she is enjoying her share of the world's amusements, do you not often, in spite of yourself I admit, bitterly compare those brilliant festivals in which she is taking part, with the dreadful loneliness to which you are abandoned? Then when, even in spite of yourself, your affection for her cools, is it her fault? Oh! don't believe it. Informed of the evil that you so carefully conceal from her, she would have only been more tenderly devoted to you and more ingeniously consoling! Why then do you doubt her, sir, before you have put her to the proof?"

"Miss Mary!" exclaimed M. De Morville, "I have never doubted her, never for one moment!"

"Then, sir, it is not her I blame. For, in short, this secret, which chance has revealed to me, cannot chance also reveal to strangers, and then may it not

become known to everybody, and be moreover bitterly exaggerated by slander?—So that when entering these saloons, where she now appears in all the innocence of an untroubled conscience, her ears may catch the whispering around her—'Her husband is suffering alone, and she is here;' 'Her husband is perhaps dying, and here she is dressing, chatting, laughing and thinking of nothing but amusement!' Do you know, sir, that it is *cruel* to expose a woman and a wife to such dreadful calumnies?"

"Miss Mary, you are too severe. The motive for my silence towards Madame De Morville——"

"Springs, no doubt, from a sentiment full of generosity, I am well aware, sir. But since you authorize me to speak in perfect sincerity——"

"Oh! do, I implore you."

"I must say there is something extremely wounding towards Madame De Morville even in this very generosity itself. It is pretty much the same as to consider her inferior to her duties of mother and wife, when you thus deprive her of the opportunity of fulfilling them. To whom, my Heaven, should we confide our pains and our afflictions, if not to those that Providence has given us to share them and to soothe them? Believe me, sir, and be no longer so reserved towards Madame De Morville. Promise me——"

"Why do you interrupt yourself, Miss Mary?"

"Because at my age and in my position, sir, I have no right to expect a promise from you."

"Don't hesitate at least to advise me."

"Well, then, I implore you, in the name of your affection for Madame De Morville, do her no longer

the injustice of concealing from her the secret that I have learned by accident."

"Miss Mary," replied M. De Morville, in a feeling tone, "I pledge you my word as an honest man that at my first attack I shall reveal the whole to my wife."

At this moment, Alphonsine, who had taken a little race to the other end of the avenue, rejoined them.

"Sir," whispered Miss Mary to M. De Morville, pointing to his daughter, "here is another for whom I forgot to ask a share in your sufferings."

That same day, Alphonsine received a letter from her brother. Having read it, she laid it on the work-table and resumed her drawing, but she could not help saying with a kind of impatience:

"What a strange fellow Gérard is becoming!"

"Alphonsine," said Miss Mary, "when you say that you almost appear angry."

"It is true! His letters are no longer what they used to be. Last year he used to tell me in such a comical way about all the queer things they did at college, the tricks they played on the teachers, and even his own foolish and laughable *shines*, for he was a good deal of a wag, was Gérard; but now he has become, in his correspondence at least, discontented and grum. I thought it would be a great pleasure for him to hear that father consented to his leaving college; I also told him that mother, on her next trip to Paris, would bring him home. This amiable brother of mine hardly thanks me for such good news. But that is not all—there is something graver still."

"Possible, Alphonsine? Why, it's getting serious."

"Oh! don't laugh, Miss Mary; what the nasty fellow writes to me is not at all a laughing matter. Just imagine, he teases me on those evenings we spend in the library: he says, between us we bore poor papa to death!"

"Oh!" said Miss Mary, smiling, "you know that's all pure envy."

"Yes, that is possible. But as to the sour temper with which I reproached him, what do you think he replies?"

"I don't know, I'm sure: but I should like to know."

"He says, my dear, he is becoming a man and that as his judgment and his stature develop themselves, all things appear to him in a different light. The idea! Monsieur Gérard becoming a man! What pretention! He is hardly nineteen yet. Oh! if he begins becoming a man by turning cross and grum, what is to become of him when he is a man all out?"

"My dear child," said Miss Mary, smiling at the petty anger of her pupil, "I'm afraid your sketch won't be much the better of your impatience towards M. Gérard."

"My sketch! Oh! that reminds me of another silly joke my gentle brother has thought proper to make. Is it *my* fault if all his masters are, as he says, old, cross, and ugly? One would think he is jealous of me for having such an advantage over him.—He don't believe one word of what I say about you, Miss Mary. In this very last letter of his, he asks me, in the most impertinent manner: 'But, really and truly, does YOUR Miss Mary know anything at all

about the first principles of drawing?' Do you understand that?"

"It is decidedly getting more and more alarming for my professional dignity," said Miss Mary, laughing merrily; "but, my dear child, why do you speak so much of me in your letters to your brother?"

"But what can I write about, if not about father, and mother, and you, Miss Mary—in short, about all those that love me, and whom I love?"

"Take courage; when M. Gérard comes here you can make peace with him, and I hope he shall also become reconciled with me."

"Ah! I know a way to be revenged on him. We shall get up a conspiracy!"

"Am I to be in it?"

"Certainly."

"If I am to take part in it, I must know the plot."

"The plot shall turn on a portrait."

"Whose?"

"Mine, Miss Mary."

"For whom?"

"For Gérard. I shall suspend it in his room, without saying a word about it, and he will find it there the day he arrives."

"And who is to paint the portrait?"

"You, of course, my dear little Miss Mary, and then I shall say to Gérard: 'Well, sir, now do you think that *really and truly* MY *Miss Mary knows anything about the first principles of drawing?*' I tell you that would be splendid revenge!"

"Excellent revenge, and worthy of your heart, my dear child. I see no objection to entering into

this conspiracy, but you must get your mother to ask me to paint your portrait for M. Gérard, you know."

"Oh! if that's the only obstacle, my nice little Miss Mary, this horrid brother of mine shall have his surprise; he shall never ask again, I promise you, if you know anything about the *principles* of drawing. Ha! ha! ha! Mr. Principles! I think I see your comical, confused face, as you hold the portrait in your hands, and gaze at it with the greatest admiration."

On Madame De Morville's return from her visit to Saint Cyr, she found nothing changed in the quiet habits of this family life into which we have tried to initiate the reader. M. De Morville was, as always, tender and kind towards his wife. Alphonsine gave her mother a gentle little scolding for having prolonged her absence for more than a week beyond the fixed day. Miss Mary had by this time fully understood the kind of maternal jealousy Madame De Morville was subject to; and she contrived by her tact and her ingenious little pleasing ways, to get herself pardoned for the wonderful progress of her pupil.

Days and months thus passed away; M. De Morville, too much a man of honor and too sensible to think of encouraging his mad passion, and too sure of himself to betray it, took advantage of every opportunity that he had, in presence of his wife and daughter, of enjoying Miss Mary's company, wit and talents. But when alone, almost in spite of himself he indulged too often in the painful reveries of this hopeless love, at which he blushed himself, but of which, fortunately, as yet no one entertained the slightest suspicion.

The governess, divided between her ever growing affection for her pupil and her recollections of home and Captain O'Reilly, lived in this little world as happy as she could be when away from the dear ones she had left in Dublin. But it took all her fortitude and resignation to bear up against the league formed against her by the housekeeper and the other servants. Her sufferings, concealed from every eye and which shall be more particularized hereafter, were cruel and incessant. But too proud and too generous to complain, Miss Mary forced herself to appear happy, and continued her work of devotedness. Her charm acted powerfully on Madame De Morville, thus by degrees cured of her jealousy; as the governess always insisted that Alphonsine should pass her recreation hours in her mother's society. It should also be added that the compliments Madame De Morville received from her neighbors on the remarkable improvement of her daughter, the flattering envy excited in society by the *possession* of such a governess as Miss Mary, the modesty, full of tact and good taste, with which the latter always kept herself out of the way in order to show off her pupil to the best advantage,—all this sufficiently gratified Madame De Morville's maternal pride, and prevented her from seeing in the young Irish girl her beloved daughter's *rival.*

The family often paid visits to their neighbors, and generally once a week they had a little reunion of their friends at the château. On such occasions, Miss Mary usually made up some excellent pretext to keep apart from these amusements, to retire to her room and to leave Alphonsine in her mother's

charge, thus sparing Madame De Morville the mortification of seeing her *governess* surrounded with attentions that by right should be paid to her *daughter*. We repeat it—Miss Mary, by her wise judgment and unselfish disposition, had known how to steer clear of the rocks (the apparent ones at least) of her position, and to hit upon that difficult medium between the gentleness that attracts our love and the dignity that inspires our respect.

Towards the end of August, Madame De Morville was to set out for Paris, pass a few days there, and return with her son to the château, where he was to spend his vacations. The evening before the departure, while Alphonsine was helping in the preparations, her mother said gaily:

"Can you keep a secret?"

"Oh! Mamma, do you doubt it?"

"Keep it even from Miss Mary?"

"That is more difficult; but, between us both, we should never let it escape, I warrant you."

"Anyway, your governess must be taken into your confidence sooner or later, so I leave you at entire liberty in her regard. But, of all this, not a word to father. It is him we must surprise."

"Then rest assured on the subject."

"Last winter and spring, you know, I received a good many invitations from our friends and relatives. So I thought of giving them here a little *fête* on the very day that I return from Paris with Gérard. I have already made all the arrangements with Madame Pivolet and the gardener. It will be charming. Your father shall know nothing about it up to the very moment of the arrival of the guests."

"Oh! yes indeed, mamma, it will be delightful."

"We shall get Gérard up to his room as soon as possible; then he will see for the first time the splendid portrait Miss Mary has painted for you—to show the young slanderer that your governess *really and truly knows a little about the principles of drawing.*"

"Ha! ha! ha! better and better!"

"But I should like *you* also, Alphonsine, to take a pretty part in the *fête*—one to get admired in."

"I? My heaven! admired! Oh! mamma, don't think of such a thing!"

"On the contrary, I think a good deal of such a thing, and I feel already proud of the sensation you shall produce."

"I produce a sensation! I! Truly, my dear little mamma, you are only joking."

"Not a bit; only listen to me. At the last grand *soirée* given by Madame De Noirfeuille, her daughter Flavie, who is not near as good a musician as you are, at least her governess is nothing like Miss Mary, played a piece on the piano that produced a grand effect. If you had only seen with what delight Madame De Noirfeuille, that happy mother, received every body's congratulations on her daughter's talents, you could easily comprehend, my dear child, how much I should like to enjoy a similar triumph. Thanks to Miss Mary, you have already made extraordinary progress, and they shall never be tired praising my clever little girl."

"But, mamma, I have never touched a piano in any one's presence!"

"So much the better! so much the better! The effect will be the greater and the more unexpected. I think I already hear them whispering on all sides: 'what talent that little Mademoiselle De Morville possesses! Who would have thought it, seeing her so modest?' And then renewed applause. Only think of the state I should be in, Alphonsine! I'm afraid I should cry like a crazy woman."

"My poor dear mamma, how much you love me!"

"I do love you, that's natural enough. All mothers love their daughters like me, but all mothers have not the same reason to be proud of them."

"Alas! my dear mamma, I'm very much afraid you deceive yourself in expecting a triumph from me."

"Why so?"

"Do you want me to play the piano in public?"

"It is my only wish."

"But, mamma, I beg of you——"

"Alphonsine, I implore you, I request of you——"

"Unfortunately, mamma, the music that I know is not of a nature to produce the least effect. The world generally don't take much pleasure, I think, in the sonatas of Mozart and Beethoven."

"I don't know much about music, but I am sure that Miss Mary has taught you so far nothing but tiresome, dry study pieces."

"But, mamma, that's all right. She don't try to make me shine, she seeks only to instruct me."

"What is the good of so much studying, then?"

"Oh! to learn, to know."

"To know, to know, that's all very well.—But people must know *that* you know."

"Oh, mamma, provided you and father are satisfied, that's all I want, or Miss Mary either."

"That may be; but I want a little more."

"Well, I will ask Miss Mary to select me a piece."

"I should think that for a piece which I desire you might leave the selection to me."

"The selection of a piece of music?"

"Certainly of a piece of music. I have as good a right to my taste as another, haven't I?"

"Of course, mamma."

"I was speaking to you of Flavie, Madame De Noirfeuille's daughter. I heard her play a piece of startling effect, and quite new. It is one of Thalberg's, with variations."

"Ah! blessed heaven! Thalberg!" cried the poor child, clasping her hands in terror.—"Thalberg!! But, mamma, don't you know that the greater part of that author's compositions are extremely difficult, and require a perfection of execution that I shall never possess! My hands are too small and too weak for such exercises, which are a real feat of strength. It is not my fault, I'm sure. Miss Mary is no flatterer and what she says you may rely on. It is only quite lately she told me that with plenty of practice I

might become a good, passable musician, but a great player never."

"I don't see any necessity for telling me what Miss Mary thinks, or for bringing forward her authority to oppose mine."

"Mamma, excuse me. I should be sorry to make you angry."

"Oh! I'm not angry, but I can't conceive why you resist me so stubbornly. Flavie De Noirfeuille, whose governess is far from having Miss Mary's talents, has produced the grandest effect by Thalberg's piece. You can, if you like, obtain the same success, and still you persist in making objections. It is insupportable. The first thing Miss Mary should teach you, I think, is to obey your mother!"

To these reproaches Alphonsine could reply only by her tears, and then Madame De Morville, regretting her hasty expressions, took her daughter, grown as she was, in her arms, and made her sit in her lap, embracing her affectionately. The poor child was soon consoled for her passing chagrin; the clouds cleared away from her face, and, smiling through her tears, she said to her mother:—

"As soon as you arrive in Paris, send me whatever piece you like, and I will study it for the *great day*."

Madame De Morville set out, but it was several days before the music came. It was Thalberg's variations on some of the airs in "*Móise in Egitto*," by Rossini. Miss Mary was overwhelmed with affliction at the sight of this selection, which the

rushing deluge of notes and the rapid change of keys render difficult enough even to a master; but Alphonsine having related the conversation she had had with her mother, the governess resigned herself to the task of making her pupil study "*Móise.*"

Madame De Morville's journey did not last long; she soon returned in company with her son Gérard.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FÊTE.

THE travellers arrived from Paris early in the morning, and Gérard repaired immediately to his father's room, where he found Alphonsine. The first greetings over, the young girl, with simple curiosity, set herself to examine her brother, whom she had not seen for a year.

"Only see, father, how big he's got," she exclaimed, trying to touch her right shoulder to his left, "and he's letting his moustache grow too! It is very pretty indeed, but mighty scant of hair, and far from being what is called a *forest*. But, come over to the light near the window. Have you remarked it, mamma?—His eyes are now a dark blue. I certainly like them better of that shade. It is quite distinguished, I tell you, blue eyes and brown hair."

Gérard yielded himself quietly to his sister's examination. He was a fine young fellow of nineteen, of slight build, and with a smooth, pale complexion that blushed like a rose at the least emotion.

The mother and son went to take a little repose while waiting for breakfast. It was only then that Gérard was to see Miss Mary, whose name he had not pronounced even once since his arrival; but, in revenge, Alphonsine kept saying to him every moment with a triumphant air:—

"At last you are going to see *my* Miss Mary! Wait a little! wait a little! you'll see what you'll see!"

And, of course, the better to see, Gérard made several important improvements in his toilet, rigidly rejecting everything that might most remotely recall the *collegian;* so when he entered the drawing-room, without daring to lift his eyes to see if Miss Mary was there, Alphonsine exclaimed with a laugh:—

"Oh! how fine you are, Gérard! Not a bit of the schoolboy about you. Really, you look like a young man. What a pretty cravat!—That white Marseilles waistcoat with pearl buttons is really and truly elegant. And patent leather boots! Bless my soul! patent leather boots! no less. Why, you're perfect. However, without flattery, you look much better now than in your cadet uniform, kepi cap, your big laced shoes, and coarse cotton stockings."

At these retrospective remarks, uttered in the liveliest tone, by his laughing sister, poor Gérard became trebly crimson when on raising his eyes he became aware that Miss Mary was seated on a chair hardly a yard off. He saluted her most profoundly.

"M. Gérard," she said to him kindly, "your dear sister has spoken to me so often about you, your studies, your sports, and even your *punishment lines*, that I feel as if we were already old acquaintances."

These allusions to his college life were not extremely flattering to Gérard; accordingly, during the breakfast he was very distant with the governess, throwing an odd glance at her only whenever he could do so without being seen by his sister. At

the end of the repast, Madame De Morville pronounced a word which for the moment chilled all the young girl's joy for her brother's return.

"Alphonsine," said she, "how is *Móise* getting on?"

"Ah! mamma," replied her daughter with a sigh, "I have been studying it every day with all my might and main, and to-day again I am going to work at it with Miss Mary. She can tell you if I'm doing my best."

"I give full justice to Alphonsine's zeal and industry," said the governess, "but this piece——"

"Yes, yes, I know it," interrupted Madame De Morville; "it must produce a grand effect. I insist on my daughter playing it, and she shall play it."

After breakfast, Alphonsine took her brother by the arm and led him aside, whispering:

"Well, Gérard?"

"What?" answered Gérard, with the most innocent face in the world, "what do you mean, Alphonsine?"

"About Miss Mary?"

"Oh! Miss Mary——"

"How do you like her?"

"Not so bad," said the youth, trying to assume the most off-hand air; "no, not so very bad—for a school-mistress."

The secret having been scrupulously kept from M. De Morville's ears, it was only towards the dinner hour, on returning from a long walk admirably planned by his wife, that he became aware, on seeing the numerous preparations, that there was to be a *fête* that evening in the château. He approved

of Madame De Morville's idea, though, in the state of mind in which he found himself, he would have far preferred loneliness to the bustle of society.

Gérard, after having stolen into his mother's room, with a terribly beating heart, in order to seize a piece of cosmetic from which he expected great assistance in giving his budding moustache and beard a deeper, a *manlier* color, had retired to his room to dress. He threw away five or six cravats before he succeeded in making a knot to his liking, and burst three pair of straw-colored gloves in trying to get them on, recalling, with good reason, the sinister predictions of the Parisian glover:—"Sir, you are taking gloves that are by far too small." At last, after having walked a good half hour up and down the room, trying to make his feet feel easy in pumps new and too tight, he took a last glance at himself in the glass, and went down stairs to the drawing-room, horribly afraid of finding himself alone there with Miss Mary. Accordingly, he uttered a long sigh of relief on seeing no one there but his father and mother.

Alphonsine and her governess were not long in making their appearance. Alphonsine wore with artless grace a charming dress that her mother had brought her from Paris. Miss Mary wore with visible embarrassment a plain white muslin dress with shorter sleeves and lower neck than at all accorded with her correct taste. She had neither ribbon, nor flower nor ornament of any kind in her hair, the long silky tresses of which quietly draped her gentle face. Still Madame De Morville was painfully struck with jealous admiration in gazing at the young Irish girl, whose good looks indeed by this time should

hardly have surprised her. But, whether it was the slight change of dress that rendered her beauty more dazzling, or that Madame De Morville looked on *her* governess with the eyes of those persons who, not knowing who she was, were sure to be enraptured with her charms, certain it is that Alphonsine's mother felt a keen pang of envy. Eyeing her with no pleased face, she could not help saying with ill-concealed acerbity, in allusion to the style of dress which left half uncovered the young girl's charming arms and shoulders:

"A high-necked dress with long sleeves would have been more becoming, Mademoiselle O'Connor."

"I know it, Madame," said the young girl meekly, "but this is the only evening dress I have."

To this reply, reminding her of Miss Mary's poverty, of course Madame De Morville had no answer to make; but she already began to condemn in secret her unfortunate idea of giving a party at all, at which her governess, who, as already mentioned, had managed to keep herself apart from all company, should undoubtedly, and for that very reason too, completely eclipse her daughter.

Poor Alphonsine, absorbed in the melancholy thought that she was condemned to go through *Móise*, had slowly approached the piano to lay upon it that fatal though classic and renowned *morceau*. She had not therefore heard her mother's uncourteous remark on Miss Mary's toilet, and now said in an almost suppliant tone:

"Mamma, is it still understood that I am to play *Móise?*" And she could not suppress a deep sigh,

casting at the same time a look of despair at her governess that seemed to say:—"Intercede with mamma for the last time to let me off this torture."

The governess understood her pupil's sufferings too well, and said in a low voice to Madame De Morville:—"My duty as governess and my affection for Alphonsine authorize me, Madame, in speaking to you with sincerity."

"Well, Mademoiselle?"

"Well, Madame, I'm afraid that Alphonsine's execution of the *Môise* will leave something to be desired."

"Then, Mademoiselle," replied Madame De Morville curtly, "that shall be because you have not instructed her sufficiently."

"Alphonsine's success, if it were possible, would have rendered me too happy not to make every exertion in my power to secure it," replied the governess, the more surprised at Madame De Morville's increasing harshness, as she had always hitherto received from her the most unvarying kindness. "We have done nothing else but practice the piece since you sent it from Paris."

"Then, Mademoiselle, I am compelled to say you must have practised it very carelessly, perhaps unwillingly, because it was one of my selection."

"Madame, permit me——"

"Mademoiselle, I will not permit any one to enjoy the malicious pleasure of setting my daughter in opposition to me."

"Oh! Madame! ——"

"And since you speak of your duties, Mademoiselle, know that the first duty of a governess is to

render herself agreeable to those who have confidence in her."

With these words, Madame De Morville, seeing her husband and son advancing to welcome some guests just arrived, proceeded to join them, leaving Miss Mary more surprised than pained at her cutting words, which fortunately however had not reached Alphonsine's ears.

The *salons* of the château began to fill. All the neighbors of six or seven leagues around,—some of their old friends from Tours, Amboise, and even Blois, all welcomed with cordiality, well acquainted with each other, received at each other's houses, both in Paris and in the country, and always meeting with new pleasure, gave this re-union a kind of a family look that might go some way to palliate Madame De Morville's stubborn determination to show off her daughter's musical talents.

Gérard met at every step young fellows who till then had always looked on him rather as a boy, but who now, knowing him to be *out of his time* and seeing the budding down on his chin, willingly admitted him into their confab, not disdaining now and then to impart to him their remarks favorable or otherwise on the ladies, married or single, who defiled before them. Proud of his initiation, he was entering another room with his new friends, when he was stopped by a M. De Blancourt, a young exquisite, very much admired, even at Paris as well as in Touraine. The distinction of his manners, the ease with which he spoke to the ladies, the little airs they gave themselves to catch his attention, finally his great reputation for being a lady-

killer of the deepest dye, which had come even to Gérard's ears, all inspired the young man with a profound respect for M. De Blancourt.

Great then was the young collegian's delight when M. De Blancourt seized him familiarly by the arm, saying:

"Dear Gérard, who is that young lady that I see here for the first time? Look, there below. Her hair is plain and she wears a white muslin dress. Don't you see her? Why, your sister is speaking to her this moment."

Gérard, rising on his toes, looked in the direction indicated, then, falling back on his heels, he said carelessly: "Oh! that young lady?—She's only my sister's governess."

And he was going to move on, but his companion still detained him.

"What!" said De Blancourt in a tone of the most lively admiration. "That charming young creature is a governess! A duchess could not have a more perfect grace or a grander air! What a splendid face! What a lovely figure! And that complexion so rosy and so pure! She must be English. It is a real portrait for a 'Book of Beauty.' No, never in my life have I seen anything more charming and more distinguished!" Then smiling and looking fixedly at Gèrard, who blushed to the eyes without hardly knowing why, M. De Blancourt whispered him:

"Ah! your sister's governess! Happy fellow! But alas! children think more of apples and candies than of gold and silver."

And M. De Blancourt hastened to salute a young

and pretty woman just then entering the room, leaving Gérard strangely troubled and rather vexed.

But sounds of *Hush! Hush!* coming from the drawing-room and two or three chords struck on the piano announce the arrival of the moment so much dreaded by Alphonsine.—Around the piano are grouped, at one end, some mothers always on a sharp look out for a chance to make the most of their daughters; at the other, Alphonsine's personal friends, forming a regular club, and whispering to her in their resolute way:

"Come! have courage! Don't be afraid! You'll get on splendidly!"

Beside the sufferer is Miss Mary, bound to stand by her pupil at this terrible and solemn moment, and coming in for a good share of her distress. At last silence is proclaimed, and Madame De Morville gives the signal to begin. Alphonsine casts a despairing look on her governess, who squeezes her hand to give her courage, and the variations on *Móise* commence.

A composer must be a bachelor of the most confirmed and cruel species, and consequently he must be completely destitute of any feeling of humanity towards the poor children condemned to piano playing by ambitious or fashionable parents, when he manufactures for their especial torture such merciless pieces as the variations on *Móise*. The illustrious Thalberg is now married to Lablache's accomplished daughter and, in his beautiful villa near Naples, we are compelled to believe that he has plenty of children around him, for we understand he has latterly left off publishing such imple-

ments of martyrdom. Alas! who would not be shocked at seeing those poor little fingers stretching and dislocating themselves to reach an extension that nature never intended them to possess? Who would not shudder at the sight of those poor arms working with the rapidity of the crank-rods of a locomotive, of those hands crossing each other, chasing each other, running away from each other, running together again, riding on each other, throwing each other off, and then getting so inextricately mixed up that you can't tell which is which? During this terrible gymnastic action, the poor culprit of course has no time to attend to the nature of the music, and accordingly we think we shall hardly surprise our readers when we inform them that poor Alphonsine's face was anything but melodious, and that no ear living could possibly distinguish the slightest trace of the melody, smothered up as it was in the thicket of ornaments that bristled so fearfully around it.

There was another who suffered perhaps even more cruelly than Alphonsine—Gérard; tenderly loving his sister, he loudly expressed his anger at the selection of the piece, saying with as much bitterness as embarrassment:—

"That's the way with all those governesses. To make us think they have talent they give their pupils pieces far beyond their power. My poor sister, like the rest, is made the victim of this foolish vanity."

Madame De Morville felt herself doubly hurt, both as the lady of the house and a mother; her jealousy and irritation against Miss Mary increased in proportion to Alphonsine's want of success and the loud

whisperings heard in all quarters on the rare beauty of her governess. Wherever she turned she caught the men throwing glances of undisguised admiration on the young Irish girl, so her vexation was at its height, and her regret for giving the party at all was extreme.

However, when poor Alphonsine's torture was over, some faint applause was heard, but, alas! it only came from the other victims of the piano, who sustained each other from *esprit de corps*. When Alphonsine got up and saw them clapping their hands, she whispered to them with charming simplicity:—

"You're applauding my deliverance, ain't you? You're right. Thank Heaven, it's over!"

The sweet child in truth did not experience in her defeat the bitter pang either of mortified vanity or of baffled audacity. Compelled to play, she had made every effort to succeed and had not succeeded. That was all. Besides, she had found grateful consolations in these words of Miss Mary, whose sincerity she could not suspect:—

"My poor dear girl, you have played much better than I had ever dared to expect!"

Except the group of ladies collected around the piano, the most of the company were silent and embarrassed. Gérard, feeling much annoyed, had quitted the room.

Madame De Morville now found herself in a strange position. Not only was her maternal pride cruelly hurt by Alphonsine's failure, but she feared she had drawn on herself a sort of ridicule, thinking that her company would judge Miss Mary by her

pupil, and that the famous Mademoiselle O'Connor, the incomparable treasure that she was fortunate enough to possess and of whom she spoke so often with pride to her friends and neighbors, should be only disparagingly appreciated in consequence of Alphonsine's want of success. So, yielding as usual to her first impulse, without ever calculating the consequences, she rose up quickly, approached Miss Mary, and said to her in a low voice, but rather imperiously:—

"I hope, Mademoiselle, that you will take your seat at the piano, and thus show that I have not made in my daughter's governess so bad a choice as people who judge of the master from the scholar might suspect."

"Ah! Madame," entreated Miss Mary in a supplicating tone, "don't ask me to perform such a painful task."

"Mademoiselle O'Connor," replied Madame De Morville with a loud voice and an imperious gesture, "take a seat at the piano, we are all waiting."

"Yes, yes, Mademoiselle, we are all waiting to hear you," said the group of young convicts, hoping to escape the dreaded punishment by sending another victim in their place.

Alphonsine, before joining her companions, who made room for her among them, stooped down to her governess, who was still hesitating, and whispered:—

"I implore you, Miss Mary. Make them forget me!"

The young Irish girl, though deeply wounded by the imperious tone with which Madame De Morville

had ordered her to go to the piano, still obeyed, fully decided however to avoid anything that would look like a contest between herself and her pupil. Far then from undertaking any piece composed for effect, she commenced a simple *adagio* by Haydn.

M. De Morville, an entire stranger to the punishment imposed on his daughter under the name of *Môise*, and who had not been present at the performance, entered the drawing-room this moment, and nobody of course spoke to him about Alphonsine's failure. He could therefore abandon himself completely to the pleasure he felt on hearing the first bars played by Miss Mary, a pleasure soon shared by all the audience. The doorway, which had been free enough a moment before, soon became thronged with listeners stretching ear and neck. Even Gérard, who was in a small ante-chamber, partook of the general impression, and the dead silence that suddenly prevailed permitted him to hear even the most delicately fingered grace notes.

Haydn's little piece expressing an idea that every body can in an instant catch, relish, and understand, its charm was immediately felt everywhere. People who knew nothing about music, and who never before beat time correctly, became astonished at their rhythmic instinct, and swayed their heads in cadence. They wondered at finding so much pleasure in so simple an affair, and they wondered still more when they saw that the composer had stopped the moment his idea was completed, not permitting himself to add one simple variation to the phrase. They did not venture, however, to applaud at once—many people never approve until they know the

name of the artist whose success they hesitate to declare—but from the approving buzz which immediately arose on all sides, there could be no doubt of Miss Mary's success.

Alphonsine, scarcely containing her joy, turned about to her companions, her countenance radiant and seeming to say:

"Oh! that's nothing. Wait till you hear her bye and bye."

Madame De Morville was fated that day to pass from one vexation to another. Miss Mary's was no longer a triumph by her mere beauty alone; her rare musical talent excited general enthusiasm, and of this enthusiasm she herself, Madame De Morville, had been the thoughtless cause by her imperious orders to Miss Mary to play. This double success deeply wounded her pride, but she had to bear the vexation in silence; could she blame *her* governess for having executed her orders?

The approbation of the audience did not make Miss Mary more ambitious; she commenced a series of three waltzes by Beethoven, each of which is only about four lines long. At the end of the first, Gérard started up exclaiming:

"That's delightful!"

Approaching the door where M. De Morville was standing, he asked him:

"Father, who is at the piano?"

"Miss Mary," replied his father, almost without turning his head, for the second waltz was commencing. Everyone felt himself under the charm of an indefinable pleasure, and, when Miss Mary quitted the piano, after a concluding little flourish, the gene-

ral applause broke forth unconstrained. The audience left their seats and talked to each other with interest and attention on a talent so pure, so elevated, so fresh; many hastened to compliment the governess. Miss Mary was confused and almost afflicted at these praises. She felt how distasteful they must have been to Madame De Morville. Indeed that lady's features were not at all radiant as her friends crowded round her, exclaiming in chorus:

"You are right. She is a gem, *your* governess is!"

"A real treasure!"

"How happy you must be to have such talents at your command!"

"You must pay her a great salary!"

Miss Mary hoped she could profit by the slight confusion of the moment to leave the drawing-room and no longer trouble any one by her presence, but she had reckoned without her pupil. Alphonsine, as much delighted, more delighted with this success than if it had been her own, ran up to her, embraced her tenderly, and remained a few moments with her arms around her neck, and her head reclining on her shoulder. The dear child, completely forgetting her own check, thought of nothing but her beloved governess's triumph. Among those surrounding and congratulating Miss Mary, the gentleman that presented his felicitations with the greatest earnestness, grace, and elegance, was M. De Blancourt.

Gérard, sharing in the general enthusiasm, was approaching Miss Mary with a blushing countenance, preparing beforehand some little complimentary phrase to address her with, when he saw M. De

Blancourt talking to the young lady, who was replying to him with modesty. At the sight he felt a little shock, and began to think a good deal less of the ease and address of the elegant young man, and even to set him down in his mind as little better than a conceited fop. But he stopped short to consider—rather sadly it must be owned—whether he was possessed of the audacity to venture on his flat and awkward compliments to Miss Mary while her ears still rang with De Blancourt's *spirituel* and polished phrases, or if it would not be just as bad to incur the danger of passing in her mind for a coarse country boor in case he maintained a silence that could only be affected. He was still a prey to this perplexity, when a servant, to whom Alphonsine had said a few words, approached and begged him, on the part of Mademoiselle, to have the kindness to go fetch her an article which she had forgotten in his room, on the mantelpiece, opposite the clock.

Gérard, almost happy at the opportunity thus afforded of leaving his decision still an open question, started off immediately.

Among all Miss Mary's hearers, none had been more completely subjugated than M. De Morville. Not only had he never before heard the little masterpieces just performed, but he was also under the influence of that electric emotion which is evolved from a general enthusiasm, and doubles the force of our sensations. Miss Mary's success he regarded as a kind of an excuse for his senseless and secret passion. Accordingly, when Alphonsine beckoned to him from the other end of the room, he obeyed the summons with pleasure, and hastened

to pay the governess his tribute of approbation. He was then turning away, when Alphonsine retained him with a roguish smile, saying:—

"Father, wait here a moment, please."

He had not long to wait: some one made his way through the crowd towards the group at the piano. It was Gérard, holding a little picture in his hand.

"Oh! father," he exclaimed, as he drew near them, "ah! sister, what a charming surprise!"

"What charming surprise?" asked M. De Morville.

"Oh! yes, pretend you know nothing about it," said Gérard to his father, showing him the picture.

"Alphonsine's portrait!" exclaimed M. De Morville.

"Yes, indeed, her portrait, and magnificently executed too! Look, it is really Alphonsine; she lives and breathes!"

"'Tis true," said M. De Morville, examining the work. Then he exclaimed—"I know only one person with talent enough to paint this picture."

"Who is it?" asked Gérard, while the portrait passed from hand to hand in a group formed around the governess. "Yes, father, tell us, if you please, who is the painter of this portrait?"

Alphonsine, taking her governess by the hand, made her brother a little mock courtesy, saying with a laugh:

"Here is the painter of my portrait, brother."

"Miss Mary!" cried Gérard.

"Yes, sir," said Alphonsine, and she added in a

whisper loud enough for the young Irish girl to hear her:

"Now, brother, I hope you shall never write again: '*But really and truly does* YOUR *Miss Mary know anything at all about the first principles of drawing?*' Ha! ha! ha! How do you feel, Mr. Principles?" and her joyous laughter so innocent and natural was re-echoed by the delighted company.

Even the governess smiled at her pupil's pretty malice, and Gérard, seeing himself betrayed by his sister, blushed up to the ears with mortification, and could hardly stammer out a few words, half praise, half excuse. He was even a little impatient in almost snatching the portrait from the hands of M. De Blancourt, who, in returning it, whispered him: "By Jove, you are a happy mortal! That splendid creature paints you in secret your sister's portrait, and it is almost your own, you're so like her. Ah! young man! young man! Remember the proverb: *Si La Jeunesse savait*——" Then, interrupting himself, he added:—"But, alas! as I said before, children care more for candies and apples than they do for gold and silver."

At this second allusion to his youth and innocence, Gérard drew back his head quite loftily, remembering, very apropos, that he had been taking fencing lessons for the last two years from the illustrious Bertrand, at that great master's private residence, number 30 Orleans Road, Petit Montrouge. He was casting about for a reply which should be at once light and cutting, but before he could find one, the young exquisite had turned his back to him, and

he heard him say to Miss Mary :—" Mademoiselle, when one is as excellent a musician as Madame Malibran, it is hardly fair to paint as well as Madame De Mirbel, the first portrait painter in Paris. On my honor, that's bearing off the palm in everything, and inflicting too great a humiliation on ladies who have nothing to boast of but the most exquisite beauty."

"Good Heavens! how happy the puppy is in finding such pretty things to say right off!" thought poor Gérard whilst listening to the lady-killer's conceited twaddle. "Miss Mary must think me exceedingly stupid. I have not yet been able to say one word on her talents, nor even to thank her for my sister's beautiful portrait."

The concert was succeeded by a ball, a splendid orchestra having come from Tours. A great number of the gentlemen had promised themselves the pleasure of dancing with Miss Mary, but their disappointment was great, for she could not be found.

"Madame," she had said to Madame De Morville, drawing her aside a moment, "allow me to retire. I am tired, and don't feel quite well. The ball will, no doubt, last till very late. Have the kindness not to insist on my presence."

"But, really, Miss Mary, don't you like to wait for the ball?" asked Madame De Morville, hardly able to contain her joyful surprise. Then, assuming an affectionate tone, which contrasted strangely with the harsh words she had addressed to the young girl only a short time before :—" Certainly not, my dear Miss Mary; much as I should like to see you at

our ball, I could never dream of insisting on your presence when you don't feel well enough to enjoy it. Only since you are good enough to ask my consent, permit me to add a condition before granting it."

"What condition, Madame?"

"You'll forget, you'll pardon me, won't you, that last attack of my ill temper, which I can't control, and which must have pained you deeply? Poor Alphonsine's want of success may, perhaps, excuse me a little in your eyes."

"Oh, Madame——"

"Of this want of success I am the cause myself, my dear Miss Mary: I readily acknowledge it. Like a regular ignoramus, I had selected that unfortunate *Móise*, and with all the stubbornness of ignorance I had insisted on its performance by my poor child. Your warnings, of course, have been fully realized. Alphonsine, in spite of your excellent lessons, in spite of her good will, failed, and no wonder, in the performance of a task far beyond her ability. Still I had neither the good sense nor the good taste to acknowledge my ridiculous selection, and I even so far forgot myself as to address you those harsh words, for which I am now both ashamed and sorry. I beg your pardon, my dear Miss Mary," she added, taking her hand.

"Oh! Madame, such an apology is altogether unnecessary. I have nothing to pardon you. I only remember what you must have suffered at not seeing dear Alphonsine come up to your reasonable expectations, even although in this case it was not at all her fault."

"Miss Mary! Miss Mary!" cried Alphonsine, joyfully alighting on her mother and her governess. "What are you hiding yourself for? Every one is asking for you and looking for you. I have ever so many invitations for you for the first quadrille and the first waltz. The ball might last two days before you could get through half your partners—in expectation.'

"My dear child," said Miss Mary, "I'm a little selfish, you know, and this time it is you who must become the victim of this dancing mania. I never liked balls, and your mother has just had the kindness to permit me to retire to my room."

"What! Miss Mary, you won't dance even a few quadrilles?"

"Not one."

"Oh, yes, at least one. I hope you'll not refuse it, Miss Mary. Poor Gérard is too much ashamed to ask you, he told me so, and wants me to engage you for him."

"Well then, my dear girl, I promise you I shall dance just as many quadrilles with M. Gérard as ever he likes."

"Oh! thank you! thank you, dear little Miss Mary" cried the young girl, whilst her mother looked on the governess with a surprised and troubled eye. "I'll just go and give my brother the good news. Won't he be happy, poor Gérard!"

"Wait a moment, Alphonsine," said Miss Mary, taking her pupil's hand. "I promise quadrilles, mind, but not to-night; to-morrow, whenever you like, when we are among ourselves. Now then,

good night, my dear child, I hope you'll enjoy yourself."

And she disappeared in spite of all her pupil's entreaties. The young Irish girl, with her usual shrewdness, had divined Madame De Morville's maternal uneasiness regarding her appearing at the ball, and thereby perhaps throwing Alphonsine into the shade. Accordingly, when she signified her intention of retiring, Madame De Morville recovered from her apprehensions, and yielding to her real good nature, had expressed her sincere regret for having allowed herself to be carried away as usual by her impulse and irritability.

The ball continued till daybreak. Alphonsine took her part in it with all the gayety of her age. Gérard did not dance. He passed the greater part of the night walking in the park. At sunrise, he saw the last carriage disappear.

"At last!" said he, with a sigh of relief.—"All are gone! I only hope that fellow, De Blancourt, will never show his face here again. I really do detest that man, though I don't know why."

CHAPTER V.

A NEW PUPIL.

THE *fête* given at the Château Morville had been attended with consequences so little agreeable to some of the members of the family that it was with real pleasure they returned once more to the quiet routine of domestic life.

One morning, a few days after the ball, M. De Morville, in presence of his wife, daughter, son, and Miss Mary, said to Madame De Morville:

"Before I called Gérard home, to keep him with us two years previous to sending him to Paris to study law, I had decided how he was to spend his time here. He must complete his education, and I will help him as well as I can. If he studied alone he might soon become tired of it. We shall therefore work together. Whatever I may have forgotten I shall rub up again. His progress shall thus be doubly dear to me, since it is to be partly my own work. Gérard has agreed to my arrangements, and we expect to derive as much pleasure as profit from our joint labors."

Madame De Morville and Alphonsine heartily approved of this plan, securing them as it did for a long time the presence of a son and a brother; and M. De Morville resumed:—

"But my powers are not quite sufficient for the

task. I can, to be sure, guide Gérard in his classics; I can even help him out in mathematics and physical science, but of drawing I have never studied anything more than linear perspective. Now Gérard has a decided talent or taste for painting. You see then, Miss Mary," continued M. De Morville, directly addressing the governess, "we cannot get on without your assistance. Will you have the kindness to allow Gérard to be present at his sister's lessons and to profit by your excellent instructions? This would only be the least of the services for which we are and always shall be so much obliged to you; but it would add, if possible, much to our gratitude."

Miss Mary signified her assent by an affirmative nod. But Alphonsine, delighted at having in her brother at once a rival and a companion, further added:

"That is not all. There is an article still wanting to the treaty, signed, sealed and delivered between father and son."

"What article?"

"Here it is: M. Gérard shall assist likewise at Mademoiselle Alphonsine's singing lessons, and shall always hold himself in readiness to place at her disposal, either in accompaniments or in singing duets or trios, that barytone voice which he has had the happiness to be in possession of for some time past."

It is hardly necessary to say that Miss Mary, with her usual kindness, showed herself quite willing to comply with her pupil's request.

The projected plans were punctually followed out. They were very successful, and the family lived in

perfect harmony. Madame De Morville seemed to have completely got over her attacks of jealousy. More and more fully appreciating the governess's sound understanding and good sense, she had even asked her to do something towards curing Gérard of a temper too often gloomy and silent, entreating her to make full use of the power that she was evidently gaining over him every day.

Nobody, in fact, could be more attentive, more earnest, more docile, than Gérard showed himself towards Miss Mary. His progress in drawing and music had been as rapid and as extraordinary as his sister's.

"The fine arts," he said, "had really more attraction for him than his literary and scientific studies with his father."

However, whenever Miss Mary, on their walks together,—for he shared in all their recreations,—pointed out to him that it was his duty by renewed efforts to testify his gratitude for the pains his father took in his education, Gérard promised her a remarkable week of classical studies; and he kept his word too, but it was always on condition that either the drawing lesson should be lengthened, or that she should teach him a solo, or some short piece of music for one performer.

Among the changes wrought in his character by this silent influence, the family had remarked without uneasiness, with pleasure even, that, instead of the rough, boisterous, impulsive fellow he had been, he was becoming every day gentler and more thoughtful.

Indeed he had gone so far as to write poetry, but

in secret, the young author admitting only Miss Mary into his confidence. It was a bucolic dialogue in Virgil's style, less pastoral than his model but more amatory. Miss Mary refused to criticise the piece, referring him to his father, whose taste in such matters was unquestioned. Gérard never told the governess his father's opinion on this his first attempt, and that put an end to eclogues. However, the young poet wrote a song for which he also composed the music. Miss Mary, at his request, sang only the melody, without minding the words, and corrected with much care his mistakes in harmony. Gérard was still more unfortunate in his first sketch *from nature.* One day at the drawing-lesson, Miss Mary thought she caught Gérard's eye oftener fixed on herself than on the chalk cast standing on the table, which he pretended to be drawing with the greatest care. It chanced that after a while, as she was returning him his portfolio, having made some correction in his drawing, the portfolio fell off the table and all the papers it contained were scattered over the floor. Alphonsine hastily commenced picking them up before Gérard could leave his place. Seeing her look at one in particular with much attention, he tried to snatch it from her, but she was too quick for him, and cried out with a joyous laugh:—

"Oh! Miss Mary, your portrait!"

"Say, Alphonsine, give me back that paper at once," cried Gérard, blushing to the ears. "You are intolerable!"

His demand came too late: the sketch was already under the eyes of the governess, who insisted on her right to know if her pupil had done her credit.

"There is some resemblance—but it is not over flattering," said Alphonsine, looking over the governess's shoulder, whilst Gérard, overwhelmed with confusion, returned to his seat.

"The general outline is pretty good," said Miss Mary, smiling, "but the details are not sufficiently worked up."

So saying, she commenced to touch it up with her pencil as if to bring out more strongly the lines and features of the countenance. At the first stroke Alphonsine protested, but Miss Mary asked, with a merry twinkle in her eye:

"Won't you allow me, dear Alphonsine, to make corrections, to which I have a double right, both as model and drawing-teacher?"

While she thus spoke, the head and indeed the whole portrait had undergone a rapid transformation under her easy pencil. Alphonsine put her hand to her mouth to keep in the laughter; her brother, silent and dejected, did not dare to raise his eyes. The metamorphosis was complete.

"What a perfect resemblance!" exclaimed Alphonsine. "Why, it's absolutely wonderful!"

And seizing the paper, she put it under her brother's eyes, crying out:—

"It's Pivolet! a real Pivolet! a superb Pivolet! like as life! Just see, how majestic she is! She looks as if she were contriving some new flight of fancy. It is perfect!"

Then snatching up the paper, from which her brother had turned away his eyes with a painful confusion, she ran off out of the room.

The lesson being over, Miss Mary began arrang-

ing the portfolios and the drawing materials, when, astonished at Gérard's silence and stillness, she turned round to look at him. The poor culprit had not quitted his place; big tears were coursing each other down his cheeks; the wretched youth seemed so humiliated and desolate that she immediately regretted the innocent malice she had allowed herself, and kindly giving him her hand, said:

"Monsieur Gérard, let us make peace. I promise to make up for my wicked trick, by commencing to-morrow a portrait of your mother, which I shall present you with to make a pair with Alphonsine's. Perhaps for this reward, you will pardon me for having for a moment assumed the features of Madame Pivolet."

"Ah! Miss Mary," cried Gérard, seizing the hand so kindly tendered to him; "Ah! Miss Mary, how good this is of you! If you knew—that sketch —I took it almost in spite of myself."

"How, Monsieur Gérard!" replied the young girl, laughing, "you took my portrait in spite of yourself? That, I acknowledge, extenuates your crime a little. Therefore," she added, assuming an extremely serious air, "as you are generally a pretty good boy, I shall not give you a *bad mark* this time."

So saying, she quitted the study-room, leaving Gérard alone.

"Alas!" he cried in despair, "she will never look on me but as a schoolboy! Sweet Heaven! I wish I was dead!"

In the meantime, Alphonsine, running off with the sketch, soon joined the housekeeper in the laundry.

"Nurse," said she, "behold and admire.—*Now*, I hope you are satisfied."

"Is it you that did that, really, Mademoiselle Alphonsine?" said the housekeeper, complacently smiling at her picture. "People are bad judges of themselves, but it seems to me to be very like."

"You give me more talent than I possess, nurse."

"Then it must be M. Gérard that did it?" asked the housekeeper.

"Yes, the ground-work is his, to be sure," said Alphonsine, "but the cunning hand that has given life and resemblance to this magnificent portrait is none other than Miss Mary's."

"Is it possible? Does she condescend to draw the picture of a poor creature like me?" whined the housekeeper with pretended pleasure. "She has a right good heart, and sooner or later good actions meet their reward.—In short, that's enough! have patience. They that live shall see!"

"What do you mean, nurse? What shall they see? That has become a very favorite expression of yours lately."

"Mademoiselle, I can say no more. People here are capable of regarding me as no better than a fortune-teller. Do you remember, Mademoiselle, how your father scolded me for saying that the doctors could not cure the old shepherd's wife, Mammy Chênot?"

"Oh, yes, I remember," said the young girl, laughing, "somebody had bewitched her, wasn't it?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle, and somebody did it so terribly, too, that what I predicted has come to pass.

The doctors have done no good. Mammy Chênot can hardly move in her bed."

"For a very good reason, no doubt; the cure must be a slow one in such a case."

"Oh! yes, of course! Why not! It's all plain!"

"So you persist, my poor Pivolet, in saying she is bewitched? Are you not ashamed, at your age, to believe in such nonsense?"

"At my age people begin to know something."

"But, you crazy woman, what do you mean by being bewitched? And who do you think bewitched her?"

"Who?"

"Yes."

"You ask me who has bewitched Mammy Chênot?"

"Yes, tell me."

"Well, it is a woman at once wicked and unlucky, as all are who bewitch people in this poor world. This makes you laugh!"

"Yes, indeed, heartily! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Well, I understand, myself—That's enough. They that live shall see."

"Why Pivolet, I hardly know you any more. You are become terribly wise and reserved all at once," replied the young girl, still laughing. "You are a regular miser now in your imagination instead of the lavish, generous, prodigal creature you used to be. You never treat us now to any of those soaring fancies that formerly delighted us so. Indeed, you have lately been as silent as a conspirator."

"Patience, Mademoiselle: they that live shall

see. I shall take good care of this picture of Miss Mary; it will often make me think of her," added the housekeeper, with a strange smile; "it will prevent me from forgetting her. I'll just go and fasten her up to the wall with four pins."

"What!" laughed Alphonsine, "you're going to fasten Miss Mary up to the wall with only four pins!"

"You're right, Mademoiselle—four pins are not enough; I should have a hundred, I should have a thousand, and drive them in up to the head!"

"Better and better!" screamed Alphonsine, at what she considered the housekeeper's usual exaggeration. "I see that you are still the same old Pivolet."

"They that live shall see," muttered the housekeeper, ominously shaking her head.

The arrival of Miss Mary, who had been searching for her pupil, interrupted the conversation, and the housekeeper, seeing the young ladies depart, went on muttering to herself, in a bitterly angry tone:—

"Yes, my *Belle Anglaise*, my fine Englishwoman, it is not only your picture that I pierce with pins, but yourself! You are too proud to appear to feel those pin thrusts, and far too proud to complain of them, and all that fits me like a glove. First, I have forced you to wait on yourself, by training Juliette so as to render her services intolerable—one pin! You like to take your cup of tea in the morning: well, sometimes I leave no sugar in the sugar bowl, sometimes I drop bits of dirt in your tea caddy—two pins! The sheets I give you I manage to render very moist and to give them a bad smell by *ironing*

them the night before with a sponge slightly steeped in dishwater——another pin!

"James is ordered to black your slippers; he brings them to me now and then, when they are new, and I make a little cut near the sole with a sharp piece of flint; this imitates the gash made by a rough stone, and as you are too proud to wear patched shoes, I ruin you in leather, my *Belle Anglaise*, seeing you are obliged to clothe yourself out of your salary. You got no less than three new pair of slippers last month—more pins! more pins!

"You are not overstocked with any kind of clothes. You have so few under garments that, with all your airs of a grand duchess, you have to give out your washing every week. Now, I have managed so well with Marianne, the washerwoman, that she puts bleaching liquid enough in the wash to make your linen as tender as paper, after which she very prettily stretches it on a thorn-hedge to dry it: so that when you get it back it looks like *lace-work!* Another pin! Accordingly last week you were obliged to purchase the materials of a dozen chemises, and, to save the money, you undertook to cut them out and make them yourself in the night time. I know that by the candles: so I just told Jean to forget putting candles in your candlesticks for three or four days. That must have vexed you—another pin! The day before yesterday you got some at last; but we had taken care to steep the wicks in water before you came to your room. You did not do much work that night—another pin!

"And even at table I attend to you, thanks to my friend, Julien the butler. From him you get only

the worst bits, and of the meats too that you *don't* like, and he carefully forgets helping you to the dishes that you *do* like. The plum pudding, for example, your national dish, which master and mistress have been mean enough to order the cook to make on your account—it is not once in four times that you get a morsel of it. And when by chance somebody notices that you are not helped, and says:—'How, Miss Mary, you are not trying the pudding?' you, rather than appear to be forgotten, answer with your silly pride:—'Thank you, I can take no more,' and you dying for a taste all the time! More pins! plenty of pins!—

"That's what comes from acting princess with the servants, and insulting them by offering them as presents what one should be ashamed to offer to a beggar as alms! Hadn't you the impudence to give them five francs a piece for a New Year's gift? whilst that simpleton of a Lagrange always gave them ten, and never assumed any airs. Though that did not prevent us from sticking a pin in her too now and then, for we don't like these governesses, that are neither fish nor flesh, neither masters nor servants, too high for the kitchen and too low for the parlor, and still despising us far more than our mistress does.

"But what Lagrange suffered is roses to what you suffer, and what you suffer now is roses to what is in store for you. But the time is not yet come; I know what I know; I have a good eye and a good ear; nothing escapes *me*. Patience! the thing is not yet ripe, and I don't want to get myself shipped off too soon—but it's all right! They that live shall see!"

Madame Pivolet, in this retrospective glance, was guilty of no exaggeration.

Ever since she had put her foot in the Château Morville, Miss Mary had been harassed by these thousand little vexations, of which however she had never complained, as much through a sentiment of dignity as through motives of compassion for those servants, whom one word from her would drive out of the house forever. The only persecutions that had painfully affected her were those which obliged her to incur continual expense; for in order to replace the articles maliciously injured or lost, she was of course obliged to take from her salary the sums that she had religiously intended for the relief of her family. Her heart bled to think that these unnecessary expenses seriously diminished the already insufficient monthly allowance that she sent her father. Besides, for fear of grieving them on her account, she had never said a word either to Henry O'Reilly or her family, concerning the secret but cruel hostilities with which she was continually persecuted by the servants. Often, very often, awake at night, had she shed bitter, burning tears, but in the presence of Monsieur and Madame De Morville, or of their daughter, her face was always smiling and contented.

Thus was accomplished the first part of Henry O'Reilly's predictions.

The future was to decide if he had not also foretold other cruel trials that awaited the poor young governess.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUITOR.

TOWARDS the beginning of October, about two months after the *fête* at the Château Morville, there was to be a grand hunting party at Madame De Noirfeuille's, to be succeeded by a ball. The De Morvilles had been all invited, including, of course, Miss Mary, that PEARL of governesses, that charming treasure which every family in the country around was dying to possess.

Miss Mary did not accept this invitation for two reasons. First, she did not like the idea of exciting again the maternal jealousy of Madame De Morville, who had shown herself so painfully hurt at a success actually forced on her; and then her health had latterly begun to give away. However loftily she pretended to disdain the mean tricks continually practiced upon her, and however great was her self-command, these thousand *pin-thrusts*, as the housekeeper called them, ended by becoming exceedingly painful to the poor foreigner. Her homesickness, too, had become stronger than ever. She had now been more than a year separated from her family, which she had never before quitted even for one day, and her desire to see them became more intense, and her dreams about them more troubled. In fact, she began to labor under the impression

that she should never see them again. Then, though she could not account for it, she felt as if the atmosphere was getting thicker and more oppressive around her every day. She felt jaded, dismal. Her instinct told her that her position in the house was becoming a false one. Not that M. De Morville had ever addressed her a syllable that was not perfectly respectful and courteous, not that she ever had as yet the least reason to suspect the existence of that senseless passion which he concealed with so much jealousy and circumspection.—But more clear-sighted with regard to Gérard, she had noticed, at first indeed without alarm, almost with pleasure, the beneficial influence she exercised over him; for until lately she had been able to turn this influence to very good account. At first, to merit her approbation, Gérard had made himself perfect in his studies, and then he had by degrees trained himself in those elegant and urbane manners, those refinements of thought, expression and action that never abandon a man, once that he learns them in his youth. Still, without exactly believing that the young man had fallen in love with her, the governess began to experience much embarrassment in her intercourse with him, and she saw clearly that she could no longer treat him as a boy. In a word, but for the imperious necessity she was under of keeping her situation for the sake of her family, she would have quitted the house at once, even with all her strong love for Alphonsine. This uneasiness, these vague but painful fears, joined to the other causes we have enumerated, ended by injuring the young girl's health. Still, she courage-

ously kept her sufferings a secret. She only acknowledged a slight indisposition, which was, however, a sufficient excuse for her not to accept Madame De Noirfeuille's invitation.

M. De Morville, on his side, alleged the regularity of his habits, which was so necessary for his delicate condition; besides, he had left off hunting and shooting ever so long. As for Gérard, being only a beginner, he preferred, he said, instead of losing glory and pleasure among a crowd of first-rate shots at Madame De Noirfeuille's, to hunt on his father's grounds in company with the gamekeeper—being thus certain of the double advantage of avoiding ridicule in case of failure, and of enjoying the skill and experience of a veteran huntsman. Such, at least, was Gérard's excuse for not accompanying his mother and sister.

It was agreed, then, that Madame De Morville and her daughter should proceed alone to St. Cyr, and that the rest of the family were to remain at the château for the ten days during which the celebration was to last. We shall soon see how this hunt was to be made the occasion of a certain meeting that had been planned long since by the parents of Alphonsine.

This young lady was now to make her debut in society. Consequently, her head could think of nothing else; she asked her mother's opinion on this, Miss Mary's on that, and for a fortnight before the great day every moment was spent in preparation.

One thing, however, considerably damped her joy: Miss Mary was evidently suffering. Her loss of color

and her increasing weakness, which she could not conceal in spite of all her courage, alarmed the whole family. But she insisted that it was nothing but a little passing indisposition, adding that Alphonsine's absence would give her ten day's holiday, and should restore her health completely.

The day of departure came at last; the pupil embraced her governess affectionately, and started with her mother. From that moment Miss Mary never left her chamber. Every morning, and several times every day, M. De Morville sent to inquire after her health, and although she had refused repeatedly to have anything to do with the doctor, she consented at last to receive him.

"Miss Mary, without being seriously in danger," said the doctor, "has still a very decided fever. This fever is rather alarming, especially as a symptom, many dangerous disorders commencing generally with something like it. But if it ceases, all danger will be over."

Gérard, hearing from the governess only through his father, took advantage of such pretexts for absence as were furnished by his pretended love for hunting and fowling. He left the house early in the morning and did not return till towards evening, never desiring to be accompanied by any one; his pouch too was always empty, his skill being about equal, as he said, to his luck. The dinner hour passed silently and sadly between the father and son. Both, pensive, absent-minded, and pre-occupied, seemed afraid of asking each other the cause of this pre-occupation, which, however, could not have escaped each other's notice. The doctor's report

on Miss Mary's state of health was the single staple of their conversation. When the meal was over, Gérard declared himself exhausted with fatigue, and M. De Morville retired to his room.

Thus the days passed away. Miss Mary began to give the doctor serious uneasiness; he spoke of the possibility of typhoid fever. She had written from her bed to tell M. De Morville not to say anything to his wife and daughter of the gravity of her indisposition, as she was afraid of alarming Alphonsine and thus spoiling her amusements. M. De Morville complied with her request. Besides, in such circumstances, the presence of his wife and daughter should have embarrassed him.

From time to time, Alphonsine wrote to her brother, and gave him an enthusiastic account of all the pleasures she was participating in, describing to him moreover many of the new faces that she saw at Madame De Noirfeuille's. On this subject, she wrote to him thus in one of her last letters:—

"Among the guests at St. Cyr, there is one in particular that mother is greatly taken with: she had known him already by reputation.—This guest is a *gentleman.* What has perhaps made me agree with mamma in looking favorably on the gentleman, is my having heard that he was an old school-fellow of yours.—He is however five or six years older than you, so that you must have been among the *little fellows* when he was among the *big fellows.* Now don't imagine for a moment that I am going to tell you his name. I am just in the humor to be mysterious, even regarding this stranger, who, however, won't be long a stranger to you, for mother has invited him, as soon

as he gets through his visit to St. Cyr, to come and spend a few days with you, to renew old acquaintance. We had been told that nearly all last year he had been subject to a gloomy melancholy; but very little of that appears to be left now, and but for a little *pensiveness*, which contrasts very well with the *noisy* merriment of the others, and which does *not* at all *displease* me, it is impossible to show oneself more amiable or agreeable than this young gentleman. So I think mamma's idea in inviting him to pass some time with us was a *very good one*. Father will be informed of this invitation by the present post; but you must not ask any names; he has received orders to tell you nothing, and to keep *two* other secrets besides.

"Good bye. I know you are *dying* of curiosity, but that will only make you wish us back again. In my letter to Miss Mary I think I forgot to mention that every one here sends her their *best wishes and regards*. I am quite *proud* of it, I assure you, and I hereby order you, sir, to present them all, with my own *best love*, to that *good and charming friend* who has rendered my studies so *pleasant*, and my year of labor so *happy*. Tell her that as ever and forever I *love her dearly*. Good bye."

By the same mail, M. De Morville received the following letter:

"I think, *mon ami*, that everything will go on according to our expectations. As I mentioned in my last letter, we have every reason to applaud ourselves for our resolution to say nothing on the subject to Alphonsine. It was a prudent one, for, if the worst came to the worst, if it all ended in

nothing, we should still have spared the feelings of your old friend the father and of my young friend the son, with whom indeed, I am perfectly enchanted. But, thank God, we need be no longer under any such apprehension. M. Théodore De Favrolle has been perfectly frank, and yesterday we came to a thorough and complete understanding of the whole affair. Here are very nearly the expressions he made use of:

"'I will not deny it, Madame. For nearly a year I was the prey of a profound passion, a passion as senseless as it was unhappy and useless, for the lady that inspired it has never been aware of it. My father often spoke to me about marriage; but I always refused his proposals, first, because I was in love, and then, because of course it was beneath a man of honor to marry when his affections were no longer free. But with the help of time and reflection, I have come to see the folly of my passion; it died out by degrees, and at last I grew quite weary of living single any longer. Father, seeing this state of things, bethought him of his favorite plan, my marriage with Mademoiselle De Morville. I gladly embraced the idea, hoping only to have the happiness of pleasing the young lady, and feeling confident that she possessed every desirable quality. My hopes have been surpassed; and I will consider the day I shall have the honor of being admitted into your family the happiest one in my life. My father thought that before Mademoiselle Alphonsine should know anything of the matter, it would be better for her to see me and know me, not as a suitor, but as a stranger, so as to

spare my pride, in case I should not be fortunate enough to find favor in her eyes. This was your idea also, Madame; I fully appreciate its delicacy, and shall always feel profoundly grateful for your and M. De Morville's kindness. The invitation to the house of a common friend, M. De Noirfeuille, has been a first-rate opportunity. I hope it shall only turn out favorably!'

"I replied to M. De Favrolle what I knew to be true: namely, that Alphonsine, when quietly sounded on the subject, liked the young gentleman very much, and felt very grateful to him for his attentions. The poor child, hitherto careless enough about the style of her dress, has begun to spend several hours at her toilet. She thinks a good deal of what he says about her, and she is the first to see him enter the room. In short, *mon ami*, they suit each other perfectly. Only this morning, M. De Favrolle begged me to acquaint Alphonsine with our ideas on the matter, assuring me that the trial had lasted long enough, and that once accepted as a suitor, he should enjoy a little more familiarity with Alphonsine, and could speak to her with an open heart. All this was expressed so well and so earnestly that, in spite of my promise not to do anything decisive before consulting you, I assure you I was on the point of saying *yes*.

"So, to say this *yes*, I'm only waiting for your authority by the next mail. I'm waiting for it the more impatiently, as a certain Madame Demazure, who has a marriageable daughter, seems to have fixed on M. De Favrolle for a son-in-law, *by hook or by crook*. She besieges him, she pursues him, she

corners him, and as her daughter is very pretty and not at all timid, I should much prefer having our projects decided upon and made known *at once*. That should put a stop to this Madame Demazure's *maternal impetuosity*.

"Here is another proof that M. De Favrolle is far from being disagreeable to Alphonsine. The poor child, you know, never in her life said *an ill word* about any one. Well, my dear, she has become quite *bitter* in speaking about this Madame Demazure, and particularly her daughter, who, it must be acknowledged, makes even others talk of her *almost shameless* advances towards M. De Favrolle. This morning I found our poor child all in tears. I asked what was the matter, but was put off with a headache. However, I remembered that yesterday evening, as they were going to dance, that impertinent little Demazure had the impudence to come up to M. De Favrolle as he was talking with us, and say to him—

"'Oh! M. De Favrolle, do you forget that I promised you the first quadrille?'

"Poor M. De Favrolle, thus hit point blank, was obliged, of course, to accept the impudent thing's invitation: but he said to me in a whisper:

"'I hope you will believe, Madame, that if I had any notion of dancing, I should have asked Mademoiselle Alphonsine for my partner first of all.'

"The poor dear child was all the evening mortally sad. Between you and me, I think she will make a very jealous wife. And even this morning, as I said before, I found her all in tears!

"You see, *mon ami*, we must be *quick* about coming to a decision. The Noirfeuilles beg me to stay a few days longer. I see nothing inconvenient in it, but it is for you to decide; though, to be *candid*, I should like to stay here a little longer, if it were only to witness this Madame Demazure's *envy*. Should not she be ashamed of herself, to fling at people's heads a daughter impudent enough *to haul off* men as partners who had no *desire whatever* of dancing with her? Once M. De Favrolle is regularly accepted among us a favored suitor, all the Demazures in the world *must* give up in despair, even if it made them sick with envy. That would be a very proper punishment, and I must say I should *glory in it*.

"Adieu, *mon ami*,—kindest regards to Miss Mary, embrace Gérard for me, and answer by return of mail.

L. De M.

"P. S.—I just remember that I have not inquired about Miss Mary's indisposition, which I hope will be a slight one, and also that I have not acquainted you with a little idea of Alphonsine's. M. De Favrolle, you know, was Miss Mary's protector on her journey from Calais to Paris, and she has often spoken about him to Alphonsine with as much esteem as gratitude. Can't you guess the dear child's idea? It is to conceal from M. De Favrolle that Miss Mary is her governess, so as to enjoy the mutual surprise of both when they recognize each other at our house. It is a little notion of hers to which I see no objection, so I have accordingly promised that you and I would be her accomplices. Ah! I have forgotten

another mystery. As we have agreed upon, I have invited M. De Favrolle to spend a few days with us. Alphonsine, knowing that he had been at college with Gérard, wishes that you should say nothing to him either about this invitation, so as to enjoy her brother's surprise too. Again I have promised to be her accomplice; don't betray our secret, but above all things answer me *immediately*. I can't bear these Demazures any longer, with their impudent pretensions."

M. De Morville consented to all the demands of his wife. She remained some time longer at Madame De Noirfeuille's, and the engagement between young De Favrolle and Alphonsine was kept no secret. Nor did M. De Morville see any harm in becoming an accomplice in the two surprises that his daughter was contriving for Gérard and her governess.

Miss Mary had been in very great danger, but a happy crisis took place, and she was rapidly recovering when Madame De Morville, in company with her daughter and M. De Favrolle, returned from St. Cyr.

The double surprise took place.

Gérard was very happy to recognize in his sister's lover an old college friend. But M. De Favrolle was profoundly affected on finding in the governess of his *fiancée* the young girl that he had once loved, so long, so passionately, and so hopelessly.

One by one, Henry O'Reilly's predictions were approaching realization.

END OF PART SECOND.

PART III.

COMPLICATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PAVILION OF THE ROCKS.

MORVILLE Park was bounded on the north by a tributary of the Indre, deep and rapid, and confined within very high, steep banks. These banks were in most places the solid rock, straight as a wall, and on the top of the highest summit had been erected a pavilion containing several rooms. Here the De Morvilles were often in the habit of assembling in the pleasant summer season, passing whole days there on account of the vast and beautiful panorama of the surrounding country that it afforded.

Situated on the highest eminence for many miles around, the pavilion commanded uninterrupted views in almost every direction over "*Le beau pays de Touraine*," the garden of France. Northward, far beyond the foreground of a rich and diversified landscape of vineyards, corn fields, woodlands, and meadows of intense verdure, the eye could trace the shining Loire coming into view beneath the lordly pinnacles of the Château Chambord, winding past the gloomy Castle of Blois, reflecting from its dark bosom the massive battlements of Amboise, and disappearing in the shadow of the vast Cathedral of Saint Martin of Tours. Eastward, passing over the ancient forest of Loches, the eye could follow the picturesque valley of the Cher, tracing it by the seas

of undulating foliage that lined its hills in the direction of Bourges. Southward, rose a prominent feature in the landscape, the white tower of Loches Castle, Louis XI.'s terrible State Prison, and far beyond it in the extreme distance the eye could barely catch the dim outlines of the Limousin mountains. Westward, spread at your feet, lay the bare levels of St. Maure, every line of stream and boundary as clear as on a map, and beyond them could be easily distinguished the great forest of Chinon, embosoming in its dark masses the gigantic wrecks of its famous castle, the Windsor of the French Kings.

Many and many a happy day had Miss Mary and her pupil passed in the pavilion, well provided with maps, books, and telescopes, studying with the keenest relish the checkered story of Central France, and, from the vantage ground of this lofty eyrie, swooping down with heated imaginations on every point of historical and romantic interest in the grand panorama lying at their feet. The golden haze of the misty past, floating over the enchanting landscape, touched with the magic "light of other days" every field, hill, river and gay château, and, turn which way they would, they continually saw flashing up before their mind's eye the bright names of the Plantagenets, the Valois Kings, Julius Cæsar, Quentin Durward, Mary Queen of Scots, Henry IV., the Guises, Cardinal Richelieu, poor Margaret of Anjou —but oftenest of all, highest and brightest of all and the greatest favorite of all, the enthusiastic young students contemplated with mingled tears of grief and veneration the dazzling name of the holy Maid of Orleans, glorious JOAN OF ARC of blessed memory!

Perhaps from no other point in the whole lovely land of Touraine could the eye linger over scenes of richer natural beauty or more thrilling historical interest than those commanded by the Pavilion of the Rocks.

But, at the time of the year in which our story now reopens, the beginning of February, the surrounding country looked sad and gloomy. The trees still stripped of their foliage, formed dusky, cheerless masses on a horizon veiled by the mists of a wintry spring. The Pavilion of the Rocks, carefully warmed, still received numerous visitors; only, in place of coming together like people that double their pleasures by sharing them, the visitors now seemed almost to avoid each other as they proceeded to this retreat. It was provided with two stairways, one as usual inside, and the other outside, leading to a little observatory overhead—well provided with astronomical apparatus. Here M. De Morville usually spent three or four months of the year, watching the stars, and with such success, by the way, that in 1840 he was fortunate enough to discover comet 156 on the sixth of January, though he was not a little chagrined on hearing that he had been anticipated by his friend and correspondent, Galle, the great Breslau astronomer, who had discovered the same comet just two days before.—At the present time of the year the observatory was closed and the door locked.

M. Théodore De Favrolle had been seated about a quarter of an hour in the little library on the second floor. After long hesitation he had written the note which he now held in his hand. At last, he rose and

gave it to his footman, who was waiting outside in the passage.

"Take this letter to its address," said he, "and bring me the answer. You'll find me waiting here."

The servant departed. M. De Favrolle turned about to enter the library, when he found himself face to face with Alphonsine's brother.

Gérard was no longer the conceited school-boy, fat and florid, yet affecting an interesting paleness and romantic sentimentality. No, it was real and profound suffering that had left deep marks on his thin and sallow cheek. The child and the school-boy had vanished forever. It was now the young man initiated into life through suffering.

"Théodore, I was waiting for you," said he to M. De Favrolle.

"You were waiting for me? It was you, then, I heard just now going up the outside staircase?"

"No."

"No? I would have wagered it was you, stealing up, and trying to make as little noise as possible with your big hunting-boots."

Gérard, pointing to his boots of the light kind that he generally wore, said:—

"It must have been one of the servants going up to the observatory."

"It don't matter," said De Favrolle; "but, if you were waiting for me, why didn't you come in? I have been in the library for more than a quarter of an hour."

"I had heard you tell your servant to wait for a letter that you were going to write. I wished to speak to you when alone."

"The mischief!" replied De Favrolle, with a forced smile. "It seems to be a very serious subject, then."

"Very serious," said Gérard in an earnest tone.

Speaking thus, the young men entered the library, the principal room in the pavilion, and lighted with three windows looking out over the country. In a corner swung one of those Lima hammocks, so cool to take a stretch in during the hot days of summer; elsewhere, wide, deep and soft arm-chairs invited you to comfortable study or pleasant reverie, according to your humor. It was here that, in happier days, the De Morville family used to meet to hear the reading of some favorite book, or, after a walk, to enjoy the pleasures of free, intimate, social, conversation.

De Favrolle took a seat before an open book, which he had not been reading. Gérard placed himself near his sister's lover, put his elbow on the table, rested his head on his hand, and kept silent.

"Gérard," said De Favrolle, "I'm listening."

"Last autumn," began the young man, in a grave tone, "you met my mother and sister at Madame De Noirfeuille's. An old project of our fathers was partly realized. You demanded my sister's hand, and you received it. Everybody soon knew that M. Théodore De Favrolle was engaged to Mademoiselle De Morville. All this took place, as I said before, last autumn."

"What is the good of all this preamble?"

"Only listen. Being my sister's accepted lover, of course you were invited here to spend some time with us. You had formerly met my sister's gover-

ness. Alphonsine, with a child-like love of amusement, wished to enjoy your surprise on meeting that young lady again. The whole family were accomplices in the innocent plot. The moment came which my sister had arranged so carefully, and when, laughing heartily, she introduced you to her governess at the breakfast-table, the change that took place in your features was sudden and profound."

"You were watching me then very attentively?" said De Favrolle, with some bitterness.

This question seemed to embarrass Gérard a little, still he replied without lifting his eyes.

"My sister had spoken so often of the amusement that she expected from this meeting, that we were all curious to watch the effects of the double surprise."

"Then you all could have remarked the perfect indifference with which Miss Mary received me."

"I don't speak of Miss Mary," said Gérard with a certain impatience, and starting at that name now pronounced for the first time in the conversation; "I'm only speaking of you, Théodore; and I saw very clearly that the sight of my sister's governess made a profound impression upon you."

"Gérard!" said Théodore, "this somewhat resembles a cross-examination, a thing so much the more strange as I left college when you began to lisp '*Mensa:*' in a word, I was a man six years ago; six months ago you were a school-boy."

"Six months ago such words would have humiliated or irritated me," replied Gérard in a melancholy tone; "but to-day, I must confess, I'm filled

with such new and disturbing thoughts that every particle of puerile vanity is completely extinguished within me. Yes, and you can even smile as you have just done, without offending me."

"Then be it so," said De Favrolle, struck with the solemnity of Gérard's tones; "it's a serious matter; let us speak seriously then!"

"That's what I have been doing since the commencement of this conversation. At the time of your entry among our family, there was nothing here but peace and happiness. Now, how different! My father is gloomy and dejected; Alphonsine can amuse him no longer; me he can hardly bear, and when we're together by ourselves his obstinate silence freezes me and makes me dumb. My mother seems a prey to some bitter trouble. My sister is hardly to be recognized. She is losing color and growing feebler every day. She often remains plunged in a melancholy silence from which all our tenderness cannot distract her. In vain does the doctor maintain that he sees nothing alarming in her case. As for my part, it alarms me very much, and even frightens me."

M. De Favrolle interrupted Gérard by rising to open the door of the library, for he had heard the sound of approaching footsteps. It was the servant to whom De Favrolle had given the note about a quarter of an hour before, who now entered; but just as he was going to speak, his master made a sign for silence, and left the library with him, carefully shutting the door.

"Well, that note?" he asked in a low voice, turning his eyes towards the library as if to assure

himself that Gérard could not hear, "what have you done with the note?"

"I delivered it into Miss Mary's own hands, sir."

"The answer?"

"She will be here at two o'clock precisely. I saw her in the park, sir, where she is waiting for Mademoiselle Alphonsine to take a ride."

"She will be here in this pavilion?"

"Yes, sir; she used the words: In the Pavilion of the Rocks."

"It is well. Not a word of this to any one."

M. De Favrolle returned to the library, and the footman departed, saying to himself:

"Won't old Pivolet bless herself hard when I tell her the whole thing! Oh! no! Not at all!"

De Favrolle found Gérard as he had left him, only his face was more down-cast than ever.

"Théodore," said the young man, without raising his eyes, "if I asked you what message was that which you appeared so desirous of concealing from me, if I asked you in the name of our common happiness, would you tell me?"

"No!" replied De Favrolle, curtly.

Both were silent for a few moments, then Gérard resumed in a calm tone:

"I was speaking to you of the unhappiness that weighs on my family, who were living so quietly before you came among them. I was speaking to you of the silent grief that is killing my sister."

"Frankly, Gérard," replied De Favrolle, after a moment's hesitation, "you have selected a bad day for these confidences, I might almost say these reproaches, which appear to me rather absurd."

"I have not selected this day," said Gérard gravely; "no, I have only been waiting until the sufferings of my family, as well as my own, had reached their limit. Then I said, it is time! I have sought this interview, and now I say to you clearly and plainly: *You* are the cause of the sufferings with which those who are dear to me are afflicted to-day."

"I?"

"You!"

"What! your father and mother can have told you——"

"They have told me nothing. But I can understand."

"You are mistaken."

"I am not mistaken. My father, connected with yours by an old friendship and restrained by delicate scruples, dares not, no more than my mother, to press you to appoint the day for a marriage so long agreed upon. They dare still less to say to you: 'It is all broken off,' for my poor sister loves you, alas! loves you to distraction. Now then, answer! Is it honorable in you to persist in thus putting off the marriage? And if you are determined not to marry her, have you the right to remain here any longer?"

"Oh! stop these questions!" cried De Favrolle. "Don't force me to reply to them."

"I don't want to quarrel. That would only carry me away from my object. Once more I ask you, do you want to break an engagement which your father and mine have had every reason to think was settled and final? Say yes, or no."

"My resolution is always the same."

"To marry my sister?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"After awhile."

"Appoint the time."

"As long as your sister is ailing, as you acknowledge yourself, can one fix the day?"

"When the day is once fixed, she shall get life and hope, and be soon as well as ever."

"You are only a child."

"That is no answer: your hesitation is killing my sister; put an end to it, let the poor creature have some reason to rely on your promises, and I say again, she shall recover life, strength and happiness."

"Well, I'll speak to your father about fixing the day!"

"Good! let us go to him this moment."

"I cannot go to-day."

"Why not?"

"Because—because I don't like to go to-day."

"Psha! That's a mere evasion."

"Evasion! be it so!" cried De Favrolle, irritated by Gérard's obstinacy. "Do you think that a boy just let loose from school shall make his will my law? I have only been too patient to listen to you at all.—Ah! you believe me to be your dupe, do you? Do you suppose that under all these fine words I don't see what you're really aiming at? Suppose I said to you: 'Don't take me for a rival. I have no notion of disturbing your boyish passion;' if I said *that* would you speak up so warmly for your sister? Ah! now you're silent, and blushing like a girl!"

"I have no reason either to be silent or to blush: I'm free."

"And do you think I'm so far gone that I can never recover my liberty?"

"You then confess that you want to break with my sister?"

"You confess then it is jealousy that makes you so ardently desire the marriage?"

"Oh! this is too much!" cried Gérard, springing up from his seat. Placing himself face to face with De Favrolle who had also risen, he added:

"Off with the masks! Théodore, you love Miss Mary!"

"I do!"

"I love her too!"

"So much the worse for you then!"

"When two men love the same woman, what do they do?"

"Madmen kill each other."

"Then I'm a madman!"

"And I'm becoming one!"

"When shall it be?"

"This evening!"

Suddenly the door opened, and Miss Mary entered the library.

CHAPTER II.

MADAME PIVOLET.

THE two young men were struck dumb at the sudden appearance of the governess; but advancing towards them perfectly calm, she began opening the windows, saying:—

"Excuse me, gentlemen, Mademoiselle Alphonsine is coming to pass some minutes here in order to enjoy this first fine day of the season."

De Favrolle and Gérard exchanged an expressive glance, to ask each other if she could have heard the challenge they were accepting just as she opened the door; but nothing in the young girl's air or voice announced alarm or uneasiness.

"Monsieur De Favrolle," said she in the most natural tone, "will you have the goodness to assist me in drawing this sofa to the window? Mademoiselle Alphonsine will rest a little while here."

Whilst De Favrolle was performing the required service, Miss Mary continued, addressing Gérard:—

"Your sister is taking an airing in the park in the open carriage. The poor child is very weak and very tired. You had better go and entertain her a little."

Gérard, seeing that De Favrolle, without saying a word, was busying himself arranging and disar-

ranging the sofa cushions, hesitated to leave, even for a moment, his rival alone with Miss Mary. She, however, seeing his hesitation, said to him affectionately:

"Don't you want to keep Alphonsine company a little while?"

Gérard ran off, but without shutting the door.

He was scarcely gone when M. De Favrolle, hastily approaching Miss Mary, who continued making preparations for the invalid, said to her in a low voice and in a mysterious tone:—

"I have received your reply, Mademoiselle: you'll come, won't you?"

"Sir," replied the governess, simply, "I never promise what I do not mean to perform."

"Then you come at two o'clock?"

"At two o'clock," she replied in a loud voice, while her clear, calm look made De Favrolle lower his eyes. "In the meantime, sir, please to remember I want to get things ready here: Mademoiselle Alphonsine no doubt will arrive in a few moments."

M. De Favrolle, surprised at this freezing reception, which contrasted very strangely as he thought with the interview she had granted, bowed, and repeated:—

"Till two o'clock, then, Mademoiselle."

At this moment, Madame Pivolet entered rapidly without seeing M. De Favrolle and Miss Mary, who were standing near the window, and went hastily towards the door opening out on the stairs leading to the observatory. At the noise M. De Favrolle made in going out, the housekeeper turned round and stopped, as if astounded at finding any one in

the library. For some moments after his departure she still remained motionless, regarding the governess with malignant curiosity.

"Is Mademoiselle De Morville coming over this way?" asked Miss Mary.

"Who?—Alphonsine?" replied the housekeeper roughly; "she's crying her eyes out, if that's any pleasure for you to hear."

"Crying!" repeated Miss Mary alarmed.—"What has happened to her?"

"This has happened to her—that *you* shan't make her cry much longer, do you hear that?"

"What do you mean, Madame Pivolet?"

"Now us two for it!" cried the housekeeper without replying to the governess, but advancing towards her with an air so menacing that, in spite of herself, Miss Mary retreated a few paces, an advantage of which the housekeeper availed herself by approaching a few paces nearer.

Miss Mary, sorry for having so far yielded to a movement of involuntary fear, saw within her reach a table on which she had just deposited her work bag, expecting to amuse herself with embroidery while Alphonsine should be resting on the sofa. Taking her seat then at this table with a coolness that stupefied Madame Pivolet, the governess took out her work, raised the needle towards the light to thread it, and said calmly to the housekeeper—

"What's all this about, Madame Pivolet!"

The housekeeper, seeing the grand scene that she had expected thus turned into an ordinary every day affair, was at first a little disconcerted; but her

anger soon getting the better of her prudence, she cried out—

"So you think that you have nothing to do but come over here from a foreign country, from an island even, for, after all, you're only an *Islander!* remember that my fair damsel! You think you have nothing to do but come into a house where you were never heard of before, and take the best place with master and mistress at table, in the drawing-room—everywhere! Do you think you have nothing to do but monopolize for yourself the child I nursed at my own breast? And do you expect that all that will pass without making honest people who are here twenty years and more, feel themselves insulted, scandalized and humiliated? If you do, you're very much mistaken, I can tell you, my fine *Islander!*"

And she uttered the word *Islander* in a tone that showed how she conceived it to be one of the most insulting epithets in her whole catalogue.

"Madame Pivolet," replied Miss Mary, now as cool as an iceberg, "won't you have the kindness to stand away a little from the window? You're rather in my light."

"In your light!" cried the housekeeper ironically, though nevertheless mechanically obeying orders and standing aside; "in your light! ha! ha! just as if we're not *light* enough ourselves! Ha! ha! ha! a little too *light* I should think, with all our fine airs, and though we look as if butter would *not* melt in our mouth! We begin, for we are far from the end, we begin with the lover in the Indias. Oh! my dear! a lover in the Indias! That gives us

consequence, but it don't prevent others from trying to take his place—the dear fellow in the Indias is too far off!"

At this ribaldry the governess still remained quite passive, though her heart sunk at hearing such profanation of a sentiment so pure and noble, her only consolation almost in her daily trials. The tears started in her eyes; for a moment she thought of leaving the room and joining Alphonsine, but, restrained by her dignity, she kept her ground, though a slight twitching shook her hands as she continued at her work.

The housekeeper, so much the more irritated at the disdainful silence of Miss Mary, as she had expected to wound her deeply, returned to the charge with increased bitterness:—

"Yes, our Indian lover is too far off, and we *Islanders* like one to be a little nearer. So we wheedle the mother, and persuade her that she can leave the house without danger, and we are already on such a good understanding with the husband that the very first evening of the wife's absence, quick! quick! we install ourselves in master's room, and there we stick until it is time to put the daughter to bed and out of the way!"

The governess had imagined, till now, that it was herself alone who had discovered the secret of M. De Morville's melancholy infatuation, a passion as deep as it had been carefully concealed. She was most painfully affected therefore at finding such a dangerous secret in possession of the housekeeper, who continued:

"But soon we say to ourselves: 'Poh! a father, a

miser,—thinking more of his frogs and spiders and stars than anything else—what can *he* give us? a little pension at the most: whereas, the son, young, good looking, innocent as a girl, is something solid; he's rich, he can marry.' So, after inveigling the father, we inveigle the son."

This time the blow was too much. Miss Mary started up, but she felt she could not stand, and that she was already giving way before the miserable calumnies uttered by the crazy fiend before her. The housekeeper, perceiving her advantage, cried with a triumphant grin:

"Oh! what's the matter with my fine *Islander?* I declare she looks a little sick."

"Look around, please, and see where my worsted ball is gone," answered the poor tortured creature in a calm voice, having once more resumed command over herself.

The housekeeper stooped at once from her habit of obedience to look for the ball, but checking herself suddenly, she exclaimed:

"How stupid of me to obey you! Am I your servant? Not at all. Quite the contrary. It is you that I shall treat as a servant, for I know all your secrets, my darling, and nice ones they are! Let us count them over a little, *Islander.* First, the Indian lover; second, M. De Morville: third, that poor innocent, M. Gérard; fourth, for there is a fourth, M. De Favrolle, that you are mean enough to wish to deprive my poor Alphonsine of. But, by the bright light of Heaven! by my Holy Faith! I'll——"

"How dare you speak thus, you wretched piece of impertinence?" cried a voice hoarse with passion.

The housekeeper turned round with a start, and saw Gérard coming in and terribly irritated at the last words she had so roughly spoken to Miss Mary. He was bursting out into reproaches and imprecations, when a dignified gesture of the governess at once calmed his anger. After a moment's pause, she asked him with an unruffled voice:

"Have you left your sister, Monsieur Gérard?"

"Yes, Miss Mary, she is so tired and silent and sad that it was painful for me to remain with her. Just now I don't feel quite in the humor to amuse her, so I thought I would come and ask you to join us."

Miss Mary accepted the offer eagerly, thus saving her dignity by not appearing to fly before the housekeeper's miserable slanders. She accepted Gérard's arm; but it was with a grieved heart and misgiving mind, as she thought of the fatal use Madame Pivolet might make of the secrets she had penetrated, that the poor young girl hastily quitted the pavilion with her companion.

"Go on, my *Belle Anglaise*," said the nurse, following her with her eyes, "they won't come out in a hurry, those pins I have just stuck into you! With all your pride and fine ladyism, I think I have touched you rather on the raw this time! Ah! you think to rob me of Alphonsine's love, do you? Patience, you're not at the end of it yet. This is only the beginning!" Then going softly towards one of the doors, she added: "That old blockhead of a Daddy Chênot ought to be here by this time, as

he promised. Positively, the *Islander* and M. Gérard have gone off in very good time."

Then she opened the door, and called in a low tone:

"Hist! Daddy Chênot! Are you there?"

Immediately the noise was heard of two wooden shoes dragging themselves down the steps coming from the observatory, and soon an old man appeared, clad like a shepherd, and leaning on a long stick: but his face announced almost an absolute want of intelligence, and he looked at Madame Pivolet with a stupid stare of deference.

"Daddy Chênot," said the housekeeper in a mysterious and solemn way, "the time is come; there is no backing out now."

"Yes, Madame Pivolet."

"I told you to meet me here to see that you understood exactly what you had to do; for time presses: I did not think any one would be in the pavilion to-day; you did well, as soon as you heard somebody, to go up to the observatory."

"Yes, Madame Pivolet, I went up there, you see, when I heard somebody come in here."

"Well, are you fully determined?"

"Determined to the death, Madame Pivolet! This here thing lasts too long, you see. My poor old woman is like a sheep with the rot in all her feet. For two years she has not stirred a peg from her bed. You have promised me that the *thing you know*, by delivering her from the witchcraft, would get her all right again. That's all I want."

"Yes, and you must be the more determined this time, you know, since the toad failed."

"Yes, Madame Pivolet, I drove seven pins into his back, and hollered 'Barrabas' like a madman. But poor Mammy Chênot still lay as stiff as a log."

"A good proof that something else must be done to break the spell the witch has thrown over her."

"No doubt."

"And you see, Daddy Chênot, you're not the only one suffering from that witch. If she was let alone, the district, the department, France, the whole world—should soon be bewitched."

"One thing is certain—Jean Faivre has lost his mule."

"Witchcraft! abominable witchcraft!"

"And old Dame Jenny has had her cow ready to burst twice in one week. I know there are people in the village who say witchcraft is all humbug, and that the cow was in danger only because it eat too much clover."

"Those that say so, Daddy, are beasts enough to eat clover themselves, or are wicked people, who neither believe in God, or the devil, or anything."

"I know that Big Peter and Long Jack who say witchcraft is all humbug, never go to Mass nor to confession, and spend the Sundays playing cards and smoking."

"Don't you see? The pagans! They'll end their days on a scaffold. But I give you my sacred word, all the misfortunes that have befallen the village lately, proceed from witchcraft of the very worst kind."

"But the Priest also says witchcraft is all humbug; and Daddy Roselle, the old soldier, who teaches the children their catechism in the church on Sundays,

says there is no such thing, and that it is only fools and old women that maintain the contrary."

"Daddy Roselle is an old fool himself, and an old heathen too, with all his catechism. What sense can an old soldier have left who has lost one leg, two arms, and has had part of his skull shot away? As for the Priest, you are quite mistaken. Don't you remember how he warned us five or six years ago against consulting the old wizard that lived on the mountain, and how he was never easy until he got master to drive the old villain away? Now, if witchcraft was all humbug, would the good Priest have taken so much trouble about it?"

"Well, Madame Pivolet, you may be right; you read books, you know, and we are only poor, ignorant creatures."

"Daddy Chênot, to make a thing come to an end, we must put an end to it. Don't I say the truth?"

"Madame Pivolet, you speak like a book."

"To put an end, then, to the witchcraft that has been laid on Mammy Chênot, on Jean Faivre's mule, and on Dame Jenny's cow, we must force the witch to go away from here. You understand that."

"Yes, Madame Pivolet, that is what you tell me always. But do you think she will take off the charm?"

"Oh! if you go and say to her with a timid air: 'Do me the favor of taking off that charm, if you please,' she will only laugh at you. But if you employ the proper means, oh! then, she'll take it off, you may be sure, and mighty quick, too!"

"Very good, Madame Pivolet; we shall employ

the proper means, and no mistake; myself, Jean Faivre, his son, Dame Jenny, and her two daughters —we're all ready; yes, by the holy fish! we're ready for anything!"

"And the 'Pond of the Shrieking Woman' is quite convenient to remind you that it isn't with sugar-sticks exactly that we compel witches to take off the charms they have thrown on poor people."

"I tell you, Madame Pivolet, we are ready for anything. Yesterday, at my wife's bedside, we all pledged ourselves saying: 'This kind of thing must be put a stop to, by the great Salamander! or we'll know for what!'"

"You did, eh! It was to know that that I wanted you here. It is understood, then, the proper means are the only means!"

"Yes, it is understood."

"You're all ready?"

"We're all ready."

"It must take place at night, you know, for all the works of Satan are done and undone in the night time."

"That's as clear as the sun."

"I will send little Pierre to your cabin to tell you when to commence."

"I can collect the whole crowd in less than no time."

"Perhaps to-night."

"The sooner the better, for all I want in this world is to see my poor old woman able to be around again."

"She'll be around, Daddy, I'll bet my head

on it, she'll be around soon and sudden. But once the moment comes, no weakness, you know!"

"Don't be alarmed."

"She'll struggle."

"We have our fists."

"She'll scream."

"Let her scream, that's all she'll get by it."

"She'll cry, and pray, and use her little piping voice to exclaim; 'My friends, my good friends, I have done you no harm! Have mercy on me!'"

"And we shall say: 'Did *you* have any mercy on poor Mammy Chênot, or on Dame Jenny's cow?'"

"Daddy Chênot!" cried the housekeeper enthusiastically, "if you'll do all that you'll be worthy of the Cross of Honor! You'll be a veteran of the Old Guard!"

"Oh! I don't want anything of the kind. Provided my old woman can be around again, I'm satisfied."

Madame Pivolet listened, and hearing the noise of carriage-wheels, she hurriedly pointed to the old shepherd the door by which he had entered, saying in a low voice:

"Quick, Daddy, out there with you, and go down the little stairway. It's understood the moment I send my little Pierre—"

"We shall be ready."

"And once Mammy Chênot is freed from the charm, she'll be able to hop about like a bird,"

added the housekeeper, pushing the old shepherd out, and shutting the door after him.

A few moments afterwards, Mademoiselle De Morville entered the library, accompanied by Gérard and Miss Mary.

CHAPTER III.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

ALPHONSINE entered the library, supported by Miss Mary on one side and Gérard on the other. The poor child could hardly be recognized. Her black eyes, glowing with a feverish brilliancy, appeared larger than ever in a countenance of deathly pallor and worn by suffering. Still sustained by her brother and the governess, she sat down before the window on the sofa; then, laying her head on the cushions, she closed her eyes, not bestowing a single glance on her favorite landscape on the north of the river.

"Alphonsine," asked Miss Mary, "do you feel comfortable?"

"Sister, do you want anything else?" asked Gérard.

Alphonsine remaining silent, he added:

"If you like it better, we can return to the park."

"No, I prefer to be here," she murmured half audibly.

"Sister, shall I send back the carriage? It can return in two hours."

"No," replied the young girl, turning her face to the back of the sofa. Then she added, with a kind of impatient and feverish hesitation:—"Yes,

send it away; I can walk back." Gérard was leaving the room, but his sister again exclaimed:—

"No, no—let it stay; I am too weak to walk!"

The three witnesses of these caprices of the poor sufferer remained for some time in strict silence.

At last, Alphonsine murmured: "I wish to be alone."

Gérard went away sadly, and Madame Pivolet followed him closely, giving Alphonsine a look of compassion, and throwing on Miss Mary a glance of angry triumph. The governess remained alone with the young girl, who now seemed pretty calm. Her closed eyelids, her tranquil face and regular breathing, seemed to show that she had yielded to the sleep caused by the fatigue of the drive. Miss Mary, standing before her, and with one hand resting on the back of the sofa, gazed at her for a while with much tenderness, and then stooped to kiss her forehead, when Alphonsine, shaking her head with impatience, said curtly:—"I'm not asleep." And again closing her eyes, she resumed her former stillness.

"You're not asleep, Alphonsine?" said Miss Mary, painfully surprised. "You felt I was going to embrace you, and yet you repulsed me!"

"I did," said the young girl, quickly, without opening her eyes; "I didn't want you to embrace me."

"And why do you thus refuse my caresses?"

"Because I don't like you."

"What do you say?" exclaimed Miss Mary, doubting what she had heard. "You don't like me!"

"No."

"Why so? And since when? It was only this morning you said you would never forget my affection."

"This morning I did not know what I know now."

"And what do you know now, my child?"

"Don't call me your child—I can't bear to hear such a word."

"Alphonsine, I entreat you, what is the cause of the terrible and most painful change that has come over you?"

"You ask me, do you?"

"Yes, I ask you most earnestly! But for Heaven's sake, open your eyes! One would think you were afraid of looking at me."

"If I shut my eyes, it is because I can't bear to look at you."

"Good Heaven! you can't bear to look at me!" cried Miss Mary, thunder-struck. "Do you know the meaning of your words?" And then she added, in a low voice—"Poor creature! her wits must be wandering."

"No, my wits are not wandering," said Alphonsine, who had heard the words muttered by the governess. "Unhappily, my wits are not at all wandering."

"Then, Alphonsine, in Heaven's name, speak out frankly; you torture me. What ails you?"

"What ails me? I'm jealous!"

As she pronounced these words, which escaped from her like a heart-rending sob, she sprang up on

the sofa, opened her eyes, and looked at the governess right in the face.

Miss Mary, startled at such an unexpected movement, recoiled a step, exclaiming sorrowfully:—"You, Alphonsine, jealous of me!"

"Yes, jealous of you! M. De Favrolle loves you. This morning he wrote to you, and you promised to meet him here. Pivolet told me so. She saw his servant give you the letter. You can't deny it!"

"I never deny what is the truth," answered Miss Mary, quietly. "M. De Favrolle did write to me this morning, and I have promised to meet him here in the pavilion."

"You see there's no denying it," murmured the young girl, bursting into tears, and covering her face in her hands. "He loves you, and you love him!"

"Ah! my poor child! I understand her now," said Miss Mary to herself. "Pardon me, oh! great God! for giving way too much to my own troubles. They have prevented me from seeing the cause of this dear and innocent creature's sufferings."

Then kneeling down before Alphonsine, whose hands still covered her face bathed in tears, she said softly:—"My dear child, listen to me."

"No, go away, I tell you, I can't bear to look at you!" murmured Alphonsine, who sobbed as if her heart was going to break.—"Oh, *you!* to deceive me thus—*you*, of all in the world, to wrong me, that loved you so!—Oh! why did you ever come to France at all! Mother was right not to want you! It was a cursed day when you first set foot in our house!"

"Alphonsine, don't speak so! It takes away all my courage; and I want it all, for the task I have undertaken to perform is far harder than I expected. Your agony, till now so sternly suppressed, has at last found vent. No wonder that in its first bursts you are unjust and cruel; but, oh! my poor child, you have wounded me sore!"

And, in spite of herself, Miss Mary's tears flowed hot and streaming.

"And don't I suffer at all?" murmured Alphonsine, still weeping bitterly.

"Yes, you suffer terribly for one so young. But, you have accused me unjustly. Soon you shall learn the groundlessness of your suspicions. To destroy them completely shall be the last duty I have to accomplish."

Miss Mary was interrupted by the unexpected return of Gérard.

He entered slowly, and hesitated a second or two near the door; then, appearing to make a great effort, he advanced towards the two young girls, with a grave, thoughtful, almost solemn air.

The governess, struck by his manner, looked at him with curiosity. He remained silent for a moment, his face, pale as death a moment ago, now flushing like scarlet; then, addressing his sister, he said in a faltering voice, and without daring to turn his eyes towards the governess:

"Alphonsine, you wanted to be alone with Miss Mary; I hesitated to disturb you; but, I must confess it, a secret is killing me, and I have not the courage or the strength to keep it hidden any longer. I might have revealed it to Miss Mary herself when

alone in her company, but I prefer to come to the point at once, and—in your presence. I hope she will appreciate such a proceeding. Then, as she loves you dearly, she may perhaps listen to me, your brother, without becoming very angry."

Alphonsine shuddered when her brother spoke of Miss Mary's affection; then, smiling bitterly, she turned her face aside to conceal her tears. The governess looked at the young man with increased surprise, saying:—

"Explain yourself, Monsieur Gérard. What secret have you to tell me?"

He blushed again, and his fine features expressed deep anguish. He wished to speak, but his emotion smothered his words; his eyes filled with tears; then, throwing himself on his knees beside the sofa where Alphonsine was lying, he embraced his sister, concealed his face in her lap, and murmured in a voice interrupted by tears:—

"My sister, my dear, good sister, I implore you, tell Miss Mary—that I love her!"

"You love her!" exclaimed the young girl in painful astonishment; then, putting her arms round his neck, she mingled her tears with his, saying—"Ah! my poor brother—then we are both most unhappy creatures indeed!"

And the two poor children, sobbing convulsively, their heads resting on each other's breast, wept in silence—Gérard trembling and overwhelmed as if he had committed some wicked action, Alphonsine astounded at the revelation of her brother's love, a love that seemed terribly ominous of new misfortunes.

Miss Mary, profoundly affected at Gérard's delicacy and loyalty in thus putting, as it were, his pure and noble love under the shield of Alphonsine's innocence, gazed at the brother and sister with inexpressible interest and regard; and her only thought now was to cure them completely, one of a senseless love, the other of a senseless jealousy.

Gérard, feeling Alphonsine's scalding tears flowing on his hands, raised up his head, saying:—

"You're weeping! You pity me then?"

"Do I pity you, poor brother!" she replied tenderly, and yet bitterly; "indeed I do pity you from my heart, for it is little you know about the object of your love. She is here for our destruction!"

"Our destruction!" exclaimed Gérard stupefied, and taking his sister's hand; "Alphonsine, what are you saying? Miss Mary our destruction! an angel of goodness!"

"Miss Mary!" sobbed Alphonsine; "she an angel of goodness! oh! sweet Virgin, help me! Don't you know, brother———"

The governess laid her hand gently on her pupil's mouth, saying in an almost supplicating tone:

"Dear child, I implore you, not a word more; you will regret hereafter the injustice of your suspicions. Listen to me a moment, and you too, Monsieur Gérard. We three are in a false position, quite unworthy of us. Let us have the courage to look at the truth right in the face. Then we shall recover that mutual esteem, that mutual affection which nothing can ever again disturb, once that we have frankly explained ourselves."

Alphonsine gave an incredulous shake of the head,

which did not escape Miss Mary; but, taking Gérard's hand and his sister's in spite of her resistance, she continued:

"Let us speak to each other in all sincerity and candor—we can easily do it—as for me, I am almost an old maid," she added with a melancholy smile; "you, Monsieur Gérard, are already a man, and Alphonsine will soon be a woman, for she shall soon be married."

At this word, Gérard's sister, without looking at Miss Mary, shivered all over, showing how painfully she felt the allusion to her blasted hopes. The governess interrupted herself only for a moment, and then continued:

"Let us explain ourselves with candor, without reserve. Let us even say what may be painful to say: then at least we shall have something wherewith to guide us out of our difficulties. Are you willing, Alphonsine?"

"Oh! what's the use?" replied the young girl.

"For my part," said Gérard drying his tears and yielding to a vague hope: "I promise not to utter a word liable either to conceal or to give a wrong construction to my thoughts." And he waited with anxiety the first question from the governess.

"Monsieur Gérard," she asked, "at the time of your arrival here from college, did I ever try to attract your attention?"

"Miss Mary," replied Gérard, astonished, "I never said you did."

"I don't accuse you of having said it, I only ask you if I ever did it."

"Never, oh! never!"

"Did I ever try to gain your friendship by flattering your self-love?"

"So far from that, Miss Mary, I have always known you, just like my father, to scold me when I did wrong and to encourage me when I did well. Sometimes even I thought you a little too severe towards me."

"Another question, Monsieur Gérard: After treating you kindly and affectionately, as was only my duty, did I ever all at once turn round and, by changing my conduct, attempt to excite your anger or vexation?"

"Never, indeed, Miss Mary. Often I kept apart because I saw you surrounded by persons whose presence troubled me. But when I approached you again, your reception of me was always the same, you never seemed to trouble yourself about my coming or my staying away. Alas! I must even confess, the evenness of your temper often gave me deep pain."

"So then, Monsieur Gérard, you don't accuse me of any coquettish trick? You acknowledge that I have never done anything to excite the love that you have just confessed to your sister. Therefore, of course, you will also acknowledge, that if this love has made you unhappy, I at least am not to be blamed for it?"

"Alas! Miss Mary, it is not your fault that I love you."

"My dear Alphonsine," said Miss Mary, turning to the young girl, who was silently listening to this interrogatory without being able to guess where the governess was taking her brother, "do you think

that Gérard has answered truly? Do you share in his ideas in my regard?"

"Well, yes, I think I do," said Alphonsine, hesitating.

"Now, then, Monsieur Gérard," said Miss Mary, "let us now speak with more sincerity if possible, than ever. Let us not shrink from the expression of any truth, no matter how embarrassing or painful it may be," she added, covered with blushes. "You love me, you say. What was your expectation? Did you expect me to love you in return?"

"Good God, Miss Mary," cried the young man, in a reproachful tone, "how can you ask me such a question? what else did I expect? You heard me just now implore my sister to tell you of my pure and honest love. Any other idea of mine should be so infamous, abominable and accursed, that I am pained to find you think me capable of entertaining it!"

"I believe you, Monsieur Gérard," said the governess, cordially pressing his hand. "I did not want to insult you or to insult myself by an unjust doubt; but, as I have said before, there are positions in life from which we must deduct frankly, even bluntly, all the consequences, in order to arrive at the reality of things. So, I believe you. Yes, you have loved me as I should be loved; me who desired no love, you have loved with all the purity of a noble heart. You have expected nothing from your passion unworthy either of me or of yourself, I am well convinced. Tell me then, what *did* you expect?"

"What did I expect?" said Gérard, astounded at the question, and turning towards his sister. "You

hear her, Alphonsine? Miss Mary asks me what I expected, what I hoped for." And addressing the governess, he added in a voice trembling and full of emotion:

"As Heaven is my witness, my only hope was to marry you, and to pass my life here with you and my sister!"

"Such a wish honors me, Monsieur Gérard, for it springs from a generous and pure sentiment. But let us see. Didn't it ever come into your head that people would think, and that they should be very right too in thinking, that our ages are not at all suitable. You are little more than twenty; I am more than twenty-four! Yes, that at least!" she added with a charming half smile. "We must be quite frank, you know. So I am almost an old maid, and you are still almost a boy, not for want of judgment, or feeling, or heart, but in years. And then just think a moment, Monsieur Gérard. I have entered your family, honorably confided in, to teach your sister a little knowledge, to help her by my experience in life, by my precepts and examples; and could I betray that confidence by stealing you from your father's and mother's arms? I have left my country and all those I love, only with the hope of helping them to live by the honorable fruits of my labor; and do you think I could ever return to my family with a fortune due to the blind chances of a senseless passion?"

"Oh! Miss Mary, I see you don't love me; you can never love me," cried Gérard, heart-broken; "and what is to become of me?"

"Everything that is good," said the governess, in

a touching voice. "With your noble heart and honorable principles, you at least *deserve* to be happy. I know at all events that I shall ever look on you as a dear friend, and I hope that you, too, as well as every one else in this dear old house, shall keep me in kindly remembrance, for I'm now going to leave it forever."

"What! you're going to leave us, Miss Mary!" cried the brother and sister together;—the one in consternation, the other with surprise and a kind of involuntary joy, for she saw in Miss Mary's departure, the departure of a rival.

"My poor child," said the governess, pressing her pupil's hand, "how much you must have suffered, you that loved me so dearly! The very idea of my departure gives you consolation." Then turning to Gérard, whose eyes anxiously sought new information: "My dear friend," said she, with an indescribable charm, "you love me with a generous affection, don't you. Well, then, I address myself to your kind, good, generous heart. Tell me, will you be sorry that I am happy, since happiness awaits me in the bosom of my family, where I am now returning?"

This appeal to the delicacy of his affection, that sweet phrase, *my dear friend*, by proving to Gérard in what esteem Miss Mary held him, began to give him some consolation. But Alphonsine, hardly able to believe her governess's words, fixed on her a penetrating look, trying to read on her face the confirmation of her hopes, and repeating mechanically:—

"You're going away: is it really true?"

"In the first place," replied Miss Mary, "your approaching marriage naturally puts an end to the duties confided to me by your parents."

Gérard shook his head, and Alphonsine murmured despairingly:

"But you know right well that such a marriage is impossible."

"I have good hopes of quite the contrary, my child. But any way, my departure is irrevocably decided upon."

These words destroyed for the moment Alphonsine's lingering doubts: but, assailed by a new fear, she snatched her hand from the governess's, and, bending down her weeping, blushing face, she exclaimed:

"But if you go away, M. De Favrolle follows you. And then, my poor brother, you shall die of grief."

The governess answered in a moving and tender voice:

"No, M. De Favrolle does not follow me; nor shall your brother die of grief. I have sufficient confidence in the strength of his judgment and the uprightness of his heart to be certain that he will nobly renounce an impossible marriage, yes, a marriage absolutely impossible: for besides the reasons I have just now given your brother to render it so, there exists another still more decisive."

"What do you mean?" cried both at once; "explain yourself, Miss Mary!"

"My dear Alphonsine," said the governess, "the difference in our ages and the serious nature of

my duties have hitherto established such relations between us that I could never speak to you affectionately without a little reserve. Certain conversations were forbidden between us, and yet I often felt how sweet it would have been to take you into my full confidence. To-day, my poor child, suffering has given you years; my authority over you is about to cease forever; you can never again be my pupil, will you be my friend?"

"Me!" said Alphonsine, making every effort to resist the charm of that voice she had always so loved to hear, but which she still imagined she had reason to distrust. "Me! your friend!"

"Yes, my dear children," she replied, looking from one to the other, "my friends, for I think I can entrust to the honor of one and the affection of the other a secret which until this moment it has been my duty to keep to myself."

"And this secret," asked Alphonsine, her eyes sparkling with impatience, "what is it?"

Miss Mary stooped towards the two young people, and, with eyes cast down and blushing cheeks, she said in a low voice:

"I love somebody myself."

Gérard covered his face in his hands to hide his painful emotion, for this avowal of Miss Mary destroyed for ever whatever hopes still lingered in spite of him: but Alphonsine started and squeezed Miss Mary's hands, exclaiming:

"It is not Monsieur De Favrolle then that you love?"

"No," replied the governess, fixing a noble, fearless glance on Alphonsine who still seemed in

doubt. "No, it is not Monsieur De Favrolle that I love."

Alphonsine's suspicions disappeared; she threw herself into Miss Mary's arms, embracing her with tears of joy.

Gérard raised his head, and trying, poor fellow, to conceal as well as he could his profound grief and disappointment, he said timidly, in a smothered voice:

"Miss Mary, excuse me, a last word. You're in love."——His sobs almost choked him. "Have you been so, long?"

"Before I left my father's house," she replied, "I was engaged to the man I love. My father and mother have blessed the union."

"Ah! my poor brother!" said Alphonsine compassionately to Gérard who seemed sunk in despair; "take courage. Alas! Miss Mary loved some one before she ever knew you!"

"Yes, you're right, sister. I will take courage," replied the young man, raising his fine honest face still bathed in tears; and, looking at the governess, he added: "Believe me, Miss Mary I *will* be worthy of your friendship—I *will* be worthy of your confidence."

"I know you will, *mon ami*," replied Miss Mary, cordially pressing the young man's hand. "And then I must tell you one of my dearest hopes. Travelling is good at your age. Perhaps in your travels you may one day come to Ireland, and then—then I can promise you a real hearty old Irish welcome from the man for whom I shall

demand your fraternal affection; for, believe me, he will deserve it."

"Ah, Miss Mary!" replied Gérard, respectfully pressing her hand to his lips, "the noble man of your choice shall always have my warmest affection and my deepest regard."

"Miss Mary," said Alphonsine hastily, "I hear steps in the adjoining room; somebody is coming."

"It must be M. De Favrolle. I told you I have promised to meet him here."

The brother and sister started at a name that wakened up their jealousy instantly, and the young man endeavored to wipe away all traces of his tears for fear his rival should notice them. The governess, understanding their trouble, said to Alphonsine:

"My child, pass out with your brother by the observatory steps. Take courage. I have good hopes for you of the result of my interview with M. De Favrolle. Here he comes; quick—quick!"

"Alas! my dear Miss Mary," replied the young girl as she went out, leaning on her brother's arm, "I'm only half consoled and comforted as yet."

"Courage, my darling child! This very day, if I can believe my own feelings, you shall be consoled and comforted to your heart's content."

Just as the brother and sister disappeared down the observatory stairs, Monsieur De Favrolle entered the library.

CHAPTER IV.

THÉODORE DE FAVROLLE.

MONSIEUR De Favrolle entered with a calm, resolute, self-possessed air, and said to Miss Mary:—

"I thank you, Mademoiselle, for having granted me an interview on which I set a great value."

"I agree with you, sir, in considering this interview both serious and important."

"You are aware of its object?"

"Perhaps I am, sir."

"Then, Mademoiselle, without circumlocution or preamble, I come to the point at once. I love you. It is absurd; it is foolish; I don't deny it. But I have loved you these two years. I thought I had cured myself, because I thought you were lost to me forever. I saw you again, and I loved you more passionately, more madly than at first. Say what you please—think what you please—I love you! This time you *must* understand it. I love you! I think I'm right in loving you; and I'm going to love you forever!"

"Monsieur De Favrolle," said Miss Mary, with dignified and touching simplicity, "nearly two years ago, the time to which you refer, fearing to be ill-treated by some ill-bred travelling companions, I addressed myself to your courtesy, your honor. You granted me a protection replete with the nicest deli-

cacy and respect. I remember it still with gratitude. I think you remember it also, in spite of the strange avowal you have just made."

"This avowal is neither discourteous nor dishonorable. The highest lady in the land cannot be offended either at being loved or being told of it."

"Persistence in such an avowal becomes offensive, sir, when the woman says to the man: 'Sir, however flattering your love may be, I cannot return it.'"

"And that is your reply to me?"

"Yes."

"You don't love me, then?"

"No; and, if you please, let us change the subject."

"Of course, you would feel more compassion for a languishing, weeping lover. But I've got through all that. Yes, I languished and wept enough after separating from you in Paris. I was in despair, for there is nothing that renders a man more gloomy or more reckless than an impossibility. But now I see you, I speak to you, I'm near you. Instead of wasting my strength and energy again in sterile despair, it is certainly wiser to employ both strength and energy in winning you, in breaking asunder the obstacles that separate us. And that is what I'm determined to do. Any other course would be weakness on my part and utter folly. So, being neither weak nor foolish, though passionately in love, I want you to love me, and I'm resolved that you shall."

"I see with pain, Monsieur De Favrolle, that a conversation, which I regard as very serious, both on account of my approaching departure and of

something that I have to say to you, is becoming a subject for jest."

"Ah! you think what I say is a jest, do you?"

"Frankly, sir, I cannot qualify by any other name this comedy of exaggerated love."

"I like the word *comedy* well. You are nearer the truth than you think; in fact you have hit it. Don't you know that many comedies turn on an abduction, and all end in a marriage?"

"An abduction!" repeated Miss Mary, who already began to tremble, and whom the tone of this passionate but determined man was fast depriving of her presence of mind.

"Show me any other means of getting out of my difficulties. By it I escape them all and I have you."

"Do you think of the house you're in, sir?"

"Certainly I do, and I hasten to quit it as soon as possible. I know by heart, I assure you before hand, Miss Mary, all the objections that you may, can, shall, or will make to my proposal. You can tell me nothing about Mademoiselle Alphonsine that I have not said to myself scores of times, over and over, by day and by night. I found her a charming creature, and that was natural enough; she was a good copy of you. In fact, on my honor, had I not seen you again I would have married her with pleasure, and she should, I think, have lived a very happy life with me, for, after all, I'm a gentleman. But, as a gentleman, I must now confess that, loving her no longer, I cannot marry her. Could her father then, her mother, her brother, chivalrous though he be, absolutely insist on the

poor child's unhappiness? Besides, such a marriage would be impossible after the scandal."

"What scandal, sir?"

"The scandal of your abduction, which I propose to effect."

"You attach great importance to that idea of abduction."

"Yes, in fact it is my last and only idea.—Accordingly, as a gentleman, I consider it my duty to warn you that I am going to carry you off at the first opportunity, so don't be too much frightened when it comes. My plan is fixed, everything is in readiness. However, I confess, a word that you uttered in the beginning of this conversation, disconcerts my projects a little."

"Was it that appeal I made to your honor, sir?" said the poor governess, more and more terrified at the iron determination that she read in the young man's stern features.

"There's no need, my dear Miss Mary, of appealing to my honor: shall you not be my wife? No, what disconcerts my plans a little is the allusion you made to your approaching departure."

"Yes, my departure may occur now at any moment."

"I'm exceedingly grateful, Miss Mary, for that valuable piece of information," replied De Favrolle, who then began looking around him as if examining the locality. "The nearness of your departure compels me to modify my project." So saying, he ran to the door leading to the outside stairs, locked it, put the key in his pocket, and returned to the governess, who, more and more alarmed, exclaimed:

"What is the explanation of this strange conduct, sir?"

"Nothing simpler, Mademoiselle. You understand that however near your departure may be, you cannot possibly leave Morville before this evening. Now time is pressing, but I have still enough left to have all my preparations made before night, and that they shall be, you may be sure. Now, here's my plan in two words. A good many persons have come to this pavilion to-day. It is most probable, then, that it shall receive no more visitors this evening. Any way, once that you are locked up here——"

"I locked up here?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle; but, please, don't interrupt me for a few moments. Once locked up here, you may call in vain. We are a long way from the house, and the windows of this room look out on the river, where no one ever passes. So your cries would be useless. I leave you here locked up in the library; I also lock the lower door, and carry off the keys. It is dark now about five o'clock, and they don't dine at the house before seven. This gives me plenty of time to prepare, for your absence can't be remarked before the second bell for dinner. I have already provided a carriage and horses, which towards nightfall shall be waiting for me at one of the little gates of the park, near this pavilion. I return here with my footman, a sure, discreet and devoted servant, to aid me in overcoming your resistance, if, as I can hardly believe, you should put me to the deplorable necessity of employing force to take you to the carriage. But, I'm already certain

that you would be quite resigned, and would set off quietly in my company. We stop three leagues from here, in the middle of the forest of Amboise, at the house of a gamekeeper's widow. She's informed beforehand, and will give you modest hospitality. A room is at your disposal. You retire to it quietly and lock yourself in, but I swear to you, Miss Mary, by the honor of my family, by my own honor as a gentleman, and by my hopes of eternal salvation, that I shall never be wanting in the most scrupulous and punctilious regard and respect towards you. My only object is to compromise you so much by appearances that you cannot help giving me your hand. We remain five or six days in the gamekeeper's house, after which, your scruples being conquered, as I'm sure they shall be, we can appear once more in the world.—My father, delighted at the stratagem, will take it on himself to appease his old friend. Your family, acquainted with Gretna Green, will fully understand our attempt to imitate an institution unfortunately wanting in France. You will grant me your pardon and your hand, for my conduct, full of the most deferential respect and affection, shall have appeased you and moved you. We are married at last, and thenceforth all my life is consecrated to prove to you that the most absurd means may infallibly lead us to perfect happiness."

M. De Favrolle expressed himself with so much confidence, the details appeared so natural, the plan so practicable in spite of its audacity, that Miss Mary, with all her external smiles of disdain, trembled in every limb. It would soon be night. At that time of the year, the fields are deserted, and the

forest of Amboise can be reached by lonely byroads. Miss Mary therefore could count on no succor whatever in this sore need.

Everything failed her at once. Only that very morning, sustained by the hope of a speedy return to her family, and by the certainty of finding Henry O'Reilly at Dublin, where he should have already arrived, she had been flattering herself with the hope that she could calm down all the passions she had wakened up unknown to herself, that she could win over angry friends and prejudiced enemies, and thus leave no one but well wishers behind her at the Château Morville. But she had counted too much on her courage, her coolness, the uprightness of her intentions, and the goodness of her cause. A daring, reckless man was now dashing her hopes to earth, and destroying her happiness forever.

Making a last effort, she stretched her hands suppliantly towards M. De Favrolle saying,—

"Oh! sir, it is impossible for you to persist in so abominable a project!"

"A thousand pardons, Mademoiselle," said M. De Favrolle, calmly, "the day is wearing away, the moments are precious, excuse me for leaving you." And hurrying to the door before she knew what he was about, he opened it quickly with the intention of locking her in, when, all at once, he found himself face to face with a stout, sturdy-looking man, wearing a drab overcoat and top boots covered with mud. De Favrolle started back with surprise, and at the same instant he heard Miss Mary exclaim, half wild with joy and surprise:—

"Oh! John! dear John Welsh! It is Heaven sends you here!"

M. De Favrolle instantly recognized the English coachman who nearly two years before had so urgently requested him to take care of the young strange lady at the Calais diligence office. Miss Mary, trembling at the sight of that faithful servant, who no doubt brought news from Ireland and who, anyway, had arrived just in the nick of time, remained leaning on the back of a chair, unable to advance to meet him. M. De Favrolle, concealing his violent rage at this awkward *contretemps*, saluted her respectfully, saying:—

"Mademoiselle, here is something that makes new and profound modifications necessary for the success of my plan. I'm going now to study them out. I have been too near happiness not to make another and more successful attempt to secure it."

And saluting her again, he departed, leaving Miss Mary alone with John Welsh.

CHAPTER V.

JOHN WELSH.

Miss Mary soon recovered from the agitation into which John Welsh's sudden and most opportune appearance had thrown her, and she ran with outstretched arms to welcome the honest fellow, crying, as he looked at her with delight:

"Oh! John, I'm so glad to see you! You come direct from Dublin, don't you? How have you left father and mother, and how are my dear sisters?" and she heartily embraced the faithful creature in the exuberance of her unexpected happiness.

"They are all first-rate, my dear Miss Mary; I never saw them better in all my life, and you're well too, thanks be to God!" answered John, drying his eyes with the back of his hand.

"You've seen them lately, John, haven't you? You saw them often, too, I'll be bound; they often mentioned you in their letters."

"Oh! yes, Miss Mary, I saw them every day regular. On my return to Dublin, your father, Squire O'Connor, recommended me so strongly to Mr. Peter Purcell, of the Imperial Hotel, that he sold me, on credit, a jaunting car and one of the sweetest little mares in the city. I soon got so well liked that gentlemen who had known me at your father's house would have no one else

to drive them south of the Liffey. The little French I had picked up was also of great use to me, and the foreign gentlemen stopping at the *Shelburne* always asked for John Welsh when they wanted to be driven to *St. Patrick's*, or the *Phœnix*, or the *Dargle*, or *Donnybrook Fair*, or any of the curiosities around Dublin.—In less than a year I had paid off Mr. Purcell all but five pounds, which his honor, long life to him, forgave me, for the sake, as he told me himself, of his noble-hearted friend, Squire O'Connor. My stable is in Upper Baggot Street, not far from where your family lives, towards *Portobello*, in a neat little cottage on the banks of the canal. The first thing I did every morning was to call at the house and take charge of their little orders and parcels, and it's many a long tramp I had the pleasure of saving the dear young ladies."

"Good honest John, just like you! My poor sisters! They can't earn much I suppose?"

"Oh! pretty fair, Miss Mary. What their little hands can do is wonderful. They knit the prettiest little caps for children; they make the loveliest embroidery on ladies' slippers; they sometimes draw out patterns for Mr. Fry's Poplin Factory; they paint the sweetest little angels and saints for book marks; they draw the most elegant pictures on fans and lamp shades; they work the tastiest lace collars; they cut Irish bog oak into the nicest crosses and breast-pins; indeed, and in truth, Miss Mary, I can't tell you half what they do. I only know that the shopkeepers in Sackville Street and Grafton Street cry out: 'beautiful!

perfectly beautiful!' when they open my parcel. Sometimes, when they're very much pleased, I ask a shilling or two more in the price, and I often get it too."

After stopping a moment to laugh at his own address, he continued:—

"Oh! I tell you, Miss Mary, the little cottage looks a great deal better now than when you left it. What with your father, the Squire's salary, the young ladies' earnings, and the remittances you contrive to send home so often from France, like the good loving darling you were always to everybody, let alone your parents,—your mother, Mrs. O'Connor, one of the best housekeepers in the country, has managed to get nice new furniture in all the rooms, from the cellar to the garret. The landlord was so pleased at the sight, one day on a visit, that he gave immediate orders to have the house papered and painted in the most elegant French style. It would do your heart good to see the beautiful roses, and flowers and things in the area lot inclosed in an iron railing before the house; but they are nothing at all to those in the neat little garden behind, with its gravel walks, and summer-house, where the old gentleman always goes on fine days to smoke and read the *Freeman* or the *Post*, while the young ladies are talking and laughing around him, though Goodness knows they're hard at work at their little notions all the time. Oh! its a sweet little spot, Miss Mary, and I hope you'll soon be ready for us to take you to it."

The word *us* struck the governess. Honest John

Welsh was not in the habit of designating himself by the plural number. A wild hope shot through her frame, and she looked eagerly at John for an explanation of the word. He understood her anxiety, and continued :—

"When I say *us*, I must tell the whole story. About ten days ago, having done pretty well during the day, and my little mare feeling tired, I put her in the stable earlier than usual, and went to see the young ladies and tell them all about their errands. It was a cold, frosty night outside; but I found them all comfortably sitting in the nice warm parlor. The Squire was reading the *Post*, his favorite paper, principally, I think, because the proprietor, Mr. Conway, is an old friend and often drops in to see the family. The only thing I like in the *Post* myself, is O'Connell's great speeches on the *Repeal of the Union.* I often read them out at the stand while we are waiting for a customer, and, I tell you, Miss Mary, it sets the boys nearly wild to hear them. But, as I was saying, the Squire was hard at the *Post;* the young ladies were painting some little pictures for the pupils of a grand school in *Stephen's Green*, where Miss Eveleen soon expects to be appointed the drawing-teacher. Mrs. O'Connor was cutting out some shirts—and a famous hand she is at that same, by all accounts—and little Ellie had fallen asleep over a picture-book on the sofa. We were all talking away very pleasantly,—for they're all as kind and as friendly with me now, God bless them! as if I was one of themselves—no difference. And it's about yourself, sure enough, we were talking, and I was telling them about the time when *Black Hawk*

ran away with you; when, though you were only a *colleen* hardly fifteen years old, you were as cool on the wild animal's back as you would be sitting at the fireside; and when you found him, in spite of all you could do, tearing like mad across the meadows, instead of pulling him one side, you shook the reins, gave a little cheer, touched him on the flank with your riding-whip, and popped him, like a bird, over the *Spa*, at a place where it was twenty-seven feet broad. Bedad, you did so, Miss Mary, and many's the man ———"

"John," said Miss Mary, smiling, "you're forgetting your story."

"Not a bit, Miss Mary. Well, in the middle of our conversation, all at once a thundering rat-at-at-at is heard at the street door. It took a start out of us all, and your mother crossed herself, wondering who the visitor could be at that hour of the night. 'I hope in God, it's no bad news,' says she to the Squire. 'Oh, no! thank Heaven!' says your father, 'we've got out of that line lately.' With all that, I could not but feel a little uneasy, when I heard your sister, Miss Annie, who had gone down stairs with a candle in her hand, give a little scream, and immediately run back again like lightning, a heavy step hot foot after her, and the clanking of a sword heard every now and then at the turns of the bannisters. We soon saw Miss Annie at the door, looking so scared that she could not speak a word, but behind her immediately appeared a tall young fellow in an officer's uniform."

"It was Henry!" cried Miss Mary, who, in spite of her sure presentiments, and John's long-winded

management of his story, was so much surprised and delighted at the news that for some time she kept perfectly still. At last she resumed in a calmer tone:—

"Well, John, they were all glad to see him, wern't they?"

"Indeed, you may say that, Miss Mary.—Your sisters, as soon as they came to themselves, screamed with joy, and threw themselves into his arms; your poor mother tried to do the same, but fell back in the chair almost in a fit; and your father, throwing off his spectacles, started up, shook both his hands with the greatest joy, and warmly welcomed him to his new house. But the Captain—the Major I mean, he is now a Major, and his regiment is ordered home to recruit—the Major, pretending not to hear any allusion to the great change in things, said to your father, in the same old, quiet, cordial way:—'Excuse me, Mr. O'Connor, for coming here so late. The storm of last night prevented us from getting into Kingstown till near twelve o'clock to-day. My first visit, you know, was for my father and family, at present visiting out at Celbridge, fully twelve miles from Dublin; my second was for you, and here I've come with as little delay as possible.' These were his very words, Miss Mary," added John, "for I was listening attentively, and I did not lose a syllable."

"Go on, John," said the young girl, who listened to his artless narrative with intense delight, and in fact had the whole affecting scene as vividly in her mind as if she had shared in it herself; "go on;

omit nothing. Oh! if you only knew how happy I am, listening to you!"

"Don't be alarmed, Miss Mary, I shall forget nothing, I promise you. I see and hear it all as if I was there still. 'My dear Henry,' said Mr. O'Connor, 'I trust we need not tell you that we deeply feel this kindness, but your visit is as extraordinary a surprise as it is a pleasure, and what surprises me still more is how your father and mother let you off so soon.' 'Oh! it was they that packed me off, sir,' says the Major. 'Take the gig this very evening,' says my father, 'and drive to Portobello as fast as you can. If they knew you had been in Dublin without calling to see them at once, they might feel themselves very much hurt by such strange and unpardonable neglect.'

"Your father looked a little surprised at these words, though of course still pleased, but the Major soon explained himself. 'My dear Mr. and Mrs. O'Connor,' says he, taking their hands; 'my dear old valued friends, my father, Myles O'Reilly, of Clonmore Castle, county Kilkenny, insists, and will take no refusal, that I shall, this very night, demand on my knees the hand of your eldest daughter, my sweet, darling Mary; and further, that you authorize me to start immediately for France, to find her out there, and escort her safe home again.'"

The poor governess could not restrain her tears, but she signed to John Welsh to continue.

"Then, Miss Mary, your father said:—'Dear O'Reilly, all the authority we ever had over our dear daughter we now surrender to you forever, and may our Holy Redeemer shower his best blessings on

you, for you deserve them.' Your mother said nothing, Miss Mary; she could only draw the Major's head over to her breast, and press it there like an infant's, kissing him now and then on the forehead. Then your sisters took him in hand, and, little Miss Ellie waking up from the sofa and recognizing her old friend, between the four, with tears and joy they almost smothered him. I began to cry for joy myself, but it's little I knew what was in store for me. After awhile tea came in, and calmed us down a little. Nothing would please them all but to insist on my sitting down to tea with them at the same table. But knowing my duty, I was as stiff as they were stout, and insisted on going to the kitchen. We compromised matters by my agreeing at last to take tea in the same room, but at a little side table where darling Miss Annie brought me tea and toast that she had made with her own sweet little hands. For some time there was so much noise I could not hear what was going on, but at last I distinguished the Major's voice: 'Mr. O'Connor,' says he, 'with your permission then, I'll start to-morrow morning for the Château Morville in France.' 'Very well, Henry,' says your father, 'I don't want to delay you longer than is necessary to write a letter to Monsieur and Madame De Morville, returning them our most grateful thanks for their uniform kindness to our dear child.' "

"What! he's here then?" interrupted Miss Mary, taking her handkerchief from her face the better to read her answer in John Welsh's eyes.

"Just wait one little moment, Miss Mary.—You told me to tell you everything, you know. Now I'm

going to tell you what brings me here. When the Major had obtained your father's permission to come for you, he added: 'As Mary does not expect me, and as Monsieur and Madame De Morville do not know me, perhaps it may not be best to present myself before them too suddenly. It would not be a bad thing to send on some one in advance to announce me to Miss Mary, and to prepare her for her immediate return home. If John Welsh has no objections, I can take him along as courier, particularly as I hear *his French is passable.*' Bedad they're his very words, Miss Mary, and I needn't say that it's proud of them I am, for I believe on my conscience, there isn't a gentleman in all Paris that speaks better French than the Major. I need not tell you, Miss Mary, I gladly accepted his offer, got a friend to take charge of my mare, came along with him to Paris, and that we have had an elegant trip of it, though mine is the best part of it so far, since I was the first to see you."

"But where is Major O'Reilly now? where have you left him? Is he to be here soon?" asked Miss Mary, whose joy began to be clouded as she thought on the difficult and painful relations she was in towards the De Morvilles and M. De Favrolle.

"I left the Major at Tours, this morning. He was not to leave till three o'clock in the afternoon, and considering the miserable post horses of this part of the country, he cannot be here till nine or ten o'clock to-night."

"That would be too late," said Miss Mary, speaking to herself: "John," she added, "however strange the idea may appear to you, we must not

let Major O'Reilly come all the way to this house—we must go and meet him."

"Miss Mary, you have but to command: I shall obey your orders whatever they may be."

"Has not Henry given you some message for me?"

"Oh! excuse me, Miss Mary, joy makes me forget business a little. First, here is a letter for yourself, and here is the one your father, the Squire, sends to Monsieur and Madame De Morville."

"Who has seen you here?" asked Miss Mary, opening the letter in which Henry O'Reilly announced to her that he had just obtained positive assurance from his Commander-in-Chief of being appointed Major in the next Brevet, and that, having been himself seriously, but not dangerously wounded, and his regiment almost annihilated, he had now an opportunity of retiring from the service on full pay, of which—as he informed her in another note—he had gladly availed himself by starting for Ireland by the overland route, and thus getting home almost as soon as his letter, and at least a year or eighteen months sooner than he had anticipated.

When John Welsh saw Miss Mary finish this letter for the third time, he thought he might venture to answer her question.

"On arriving at the big house," said he, "I asked the servant that came to the door, if I could see Miss Mary O'Connor. He surveyed me very attentively for a second or two, and then went to speak a few words to a stout middle aged woman who was passing through the hall, and who also ex-

amined me very closely. The servant then returned, told me to follow him, and led me to this pavilion."

"Have you come on horseback?"

"Yes, Miss Mary, like a regular courier, and by the shortest road, too, and the postilion rode back with his horses immediately. Major Henry will come by the other road in the carriage that he hired at Calais."

"At Chambourg, the last station on your road, did you remark if they had any carriage to hire?"

"Yes, Miss Mary, I saw a travelling carriage in the yard."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of M. De Morville. He appeared more thoughtful and melancholy than usual. He was evidently surprised at John's presence, and said to the governess:

"Alphonsine has returned with her brother. Night was approaching, Miss Mary; knowing that you had remained in the pavilion and seeing no sign of your return, I was a little uneasy."

"I thank you sincerely, sir, for this mark of interest," said the governess, who, after a few moments' silence, had now taken her resolution. "I have a little favor to ask of you."

"I am at your command, Mademoiselle."

Miss Mary pointed to the pens and paper lying on the table, saying:

"Will you have the kindness to order your coachman to place at once a horse and carriage at the disposal of this man, an old and faithful servant of my family?"

Surprised at such a request, M. De Morville would like to ask a few questions; but, reflecting that she

would not probably like to explain herself before a stranger, he sat down to the table without saying a word, wrote the order, and handed it to Miss Mary.

The young girl thanked him, and, going over to John, gave him the paper, saying at the same time to him in Irish, which she had learned from her nurse and spoke pretty well:

"John, like a good fellow, go at once to the house and give the coachman this order. As soon as the carriage is ready, bring it here to the end of the avenue on the right of the pavilion. Don't lose sight of the carriage on any account, and come back at once to me as soon as it is ready. If the people of the house say anything, tell them you are executing M. De Morville's orders. Ah!" she added, writing a few lines on a piece of paper, "ask for Mademoiselle Alphonsine's chambermaid and tell her to give you the articles mentioned in this note."

John Welsh took the two papers and looked ruefully at them for some time, for, being a perfect stranger at the château, the different orders he had to execute appeared to him decidedly embarrassing; however, seeing there was no time for explanations, and trusting to his usual good luck, he went off determined if possible to fulfil them to the letter.

A few steps from the pavilion he met the housekeeper. Madame Pivolet, very much surprised at John's arrival, and at the protracted stay of the governess in the pavilion of the Rocks, had been returning there to find out the cause, when, seeing M. De Morville a long way behind her directing his steps there too, she concealed

herself in a clump of bushes, let him pass by, and then stealthily followed him, saying:—

"A rendezvous, as I'm a living woman! I would go off and tell Missis this minute only I want to know if the man with the drab riding coat and the boots wrongside out, is still in the pavilion with the *Islander.*"

She was soon at ease on this point. At the sight of John leaving the pavilion, she advanced towards him, and in the readiest manner offered him her services, which the honest fellow accepted, the more thankfully as he no more knew where he was than the man in the moon, only he felt he was to do *something* for Miss Mary, and *that* he was determined to do, come what might. He followed the housekeeper, therefore, to the château with a light heart, though in his attempts at conversation he was not very successful. The housekeeper had other fish to fry, as she said herself, and the thoughts flying through her scheming brain might be rendered by the following words:—

"All goes well! First, let us tell Madame that her husband has a rendezvous with the Englishwoman, and then I shall send little Pierre right away to Daddy Chênot and his crew, and tell them to take their station in the woods where the Tours road passes near the '*Pond of the Shrieking Woman.*' Ah! you shall hardly escape me this time, my gentle Islander!"

Whilst Madame Pivolet is thus concocting her wicked plots, let us return to the Pavilion of the Rocks, where we left Monsieur De Morville conversing with Miss Mary.

CHAPTER VI.

MONSIEUR DE MORVILLE.

THE evening was wearing away: it would soon be sunset.

We left Monsieur De Morville and Miss Mary together in the library of the Pavilion of the Rocks.

John Welsh had scarcely left the room, when M. De Morville said to the governess:—"Miss Mary, simple politeness prevented me from asking in presence of a stranger what use you intended to make of the carriage that I am happy to place at your orders. May I now, without being too indiscreet, address you a question on the subject?"

"I was just going to satisfy your very natural curiosity, sir. I intend to make use of that carriage to take me to Tours, where I shall leave it, and set off at once for England."

M. De Morville started. He looked at the governess with astonishment, for he could hardly credit his ears, and said:—"What! Miss Mary—you say——"

"I say, sir, that I am returning to Dublin, my family having just sent for me."

"Go away! Impossible! A departure so unexpected! At such short notice!"

"In this rather hasty departure, however, sir, please not to see any want of respect and regard for you and your family. No; for, even before the arrival of the servant who is come to take me, I was determined on going away, and believe me, sir, it required grave reasons, very grave reasons, to compel me to take such a determination."

"To go away!" cried M. De Morville mournfully, without paying any attention to her last words; "to go away! What! is this to be the last time I shall ever speak to you again—ever see you again! Oh! it is impossible! A man is not to be killed this way with one blow! For you know you are killing me! You know well I can't live without you! You know well that I love you!"

"Oh! sir, sir," cried Miss Mary, turning purple with confusion, "not a word more! I will not listen to such insulting expressions!"

"Oh! don't say that you were not aware of my unhappy passion. You know what irresistible charm attracted me towards you — what happiness I had in telling you my life, my secrets, even my faults! A timid reserve followed this first impulse; but it was the struggle of respect and honor with a fatal passion. Oh! the traces of this struggle must have been only too evident to your eyes. What! you never guessed the cause of the moping melancholy that made me seek solitude where I could isolate myself from every interest and every affection? And those sleepless nights passed in swallowing my tears,

in wildly exaggerating to myself the consequences of this fatal love, in order to kill it! What! you never guessed anything, never conjectured anything from my suffering features, from my eyes red with tears and hollow from watching? Oh! heaven of heaven! to have suffered so much and not to have even the poor consolation of saying, 'My sufferings are at least known, and perhaps I'm pitied.'"

Whilst speaking, M. De Morville had let himself fall back on a chair from weakness. Miss Mary, terrified at the violence of the words she heard, did not dare to answer at once, for fear of again exciting a grief that had burst forth for the first time with such terrible impetuosity. "You accuse me, sir," replied the governess at last, in a tone of reproach, severe and dignified: "you accuse me, whereas the only fault of which I'm guilty is to have put faith in your honor and in your loyalty!"

M. De Morville raised his head at these words, and Miss Mary continued:—

"Yes; for, never, oh never! sir, would I have believed you capable of forgetting your duties towards me. And these duties were just as imperious, as sacred, as mine were towards your family. You knew my misfortunes, and you owed me compassion. You knew my conscientiousness, and you owed me respect. You knew that a marriage project, founded on mutual affection from childhood, had been destroyed by the reverses of my family, and you owed me pity. In all these duties and obligations, so sacred to a gentleman and a man of honorable feeling, you have just now failed, sir, most cruelly!"

"Alas! then am I such a criminal?" cried M. De Morville, painfully oppressed, "is it my fault that, in the monotony of my existence, a person has all at once appeared whose talents, education, and disposition have been appreciated by all, and of course by me? is it my fault that, chance, revealing to you the history of my life, has redoubled my confidence in you? Is it my fault, if this confidence has changed into affection? And as to this affection, have I ever revealed the most remote symptom of it by any means that honor would disapprove of? Have I ever tried to pervert your mind or to seduce your heart? No, no; I have suffered—suffered in silence—suffered alone—suffered always; and my great crime, what is it? It is just to reveal my sufferings at the last moment, on the very day when you leave me forever the victim of incurable despair."

The words and attitude of M. De Morville revealed a grief so real, so deep, that Miss Mary, instead of replying to him with the bitterness of offended dignity, saw in him only a weak, sickly soul that should not be irritated, but rather strengthened and cured. She therefore replied as follows:—

"Be satisfied, sir, that I do pity you. I feel for you, not that sympathetic, generous compassion inspired by a cruel and undeserved misfortune, but that sorrowful pity inspired by the sight of a weak, feeble spirit, which, wishing to do what is right, has not strength enough to lift itself out of what is wrong. You, a man of great physical courage, have no moral courage. A guilty, senseless passion attacks your heart, and, instead of resisting it and

killing it, all you can do is to bear it and bewail it in secret in the gloomy idleness of a useless life, absorbed in philosophy and science—neglecting everything for 'frogs, spiders and stars'—you, you to whom our dear good God has given a family to love and to guide through the difficulties of this world to the eternal world to come!"

"No, no, Miss Mary, I have not been so weak with this passion. I have struggled; I have worn myself out in struggling, and you should have never known it only for the word that announced your approaching departure."

"And while exhausting your strength in this struggle, concentrated in yourself, indifferent to everything around you, and forgetful of your duties, you did not see what disorder and misfortune threatened the very existence of your family. I saw these misfortunes and endeavored as well as I could to avert them. No, sir, even if I had not to obey the call of my parents, who request me to return, my departure would still be absolutely indispensable."

"Have I understood you correctly?" cried M. De Morville. "It is *I*, you say, who have been the cause of your departure."

"In leaving this house, sir, I am flying from the consequences of your deplorable blindness."

M. De Morville looked at her with astonishment. She continued:

"Could not you, sir, a man of experience, have easily foreseen that your son might become the victim of an involuntary passion? Was it prudent, was it decent to thrust him incessantly into my company by making him take part in his sister's

lessons? No, no, the slightest regard for my position should have prevented you from exposing your son to a danger, against which my own dignity forbade me to warn you."

"What do you say?" exclaimed M. De Morville, shuddering, "Gérard loves you!"

"If it were so, sir, which of us two, you or me, could your son blame for it? Should he accuse me, who in all my relations with him have employed the extremest reserve, or should he accuse you whose guilty want of foresight abandoned the poor child to the wild impulses of his age? Thus, in your culpable blindness, you never suspected that your son also suffered from a senseless passion which made him your rival."

"He! my son! my rival!" exclaimed M. De Morville, overwhelmed with shame and remorse; and he concealed his face in his hands, murmuring, "Ah! this is too much!"

Miss Mary continued:—

"And your daughter, has she been any more than your son the object of your solicitude? Have the fading away and the sinking spirits of the poor child ever awakened your suspicions or alarms as to the real cause of her sufferings?"

M. De Morville looked at Miss Mary with a surprise full of anxiety, saying:—

"Don't you know that the doctor attributes her condition to a disordered state of the nerves?"

"The watchful tenderness of a father would soon have discovered the doctor's mistake, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"Then, sir, have you never entertained any suspi-

cion, any surmise, at seeing M. De Favrolle adjourning and deferring day after day the period of his marriage with your daughter?"

"The state of Alphonsine's health explains only too clearly his reasons for retarding the marriage."

"The cause, the real cause of your daughter's sufferings, sir, is jealousy."

"Alphonsine jealous! and of whom, blessed Heaven!"

"Of me, sir. But, thanks be to God, I have already convinced her of her mistake."

"Alphonsine jealous of you, Miss Mary!" repeated M. De Morville with increasing astonishment. "And what is the cause of this jealousy?"

"Monsieur De Favrolle."

"He loves you?"

"He thinks he does: but it is no such thing. A transient passion, irritated a little by my indifference, that shall soon be extinguished forever. M. De Favrolle will soon return to the real desire of his heart, and Alphonsine shall find in an early marriage a remedy for her sufferings and the realization of all her hopes. And now, sir, think of the terrible responsibility that should lie on you in case, which God in his mercy forbid! that your children's future life and happiness were compromised forever!"

M. De Morville had heard Miss Mary's revelations and warnings with increasing anxiety and redoubling shame and remorse. The salutary influence of her words soon began to tell on him. He raised his head, till then bowed down in confusion, and the feeble suffering expression of his features gave way by degrees to one of calm and dignified resolution.

He presented his hand to the young girl, and, as she hesitated to take it, he said in a decided but feeling voice:

"Miss Mary, don't refuse to take my hand; it is that of a man who, after being weak enough and cowardly enough to forget his most sacred duties, at your voice wakes up from a painful dream. The illusion is now dispelled, and reality appears. Your revelations open my eyes, and I see at last how guilty I have been. I recognize the fatal responsibility I have incurred towards my son and daughter, who might, alas! justly bring me to an account for the early blight of their fair young lives, they that could so justly lay so many claims on happiness. The lesson is cruel, but it shall not be fruitless. All my energy, all my judgment, all the affection that I still feel and ever have felt for my children, shall be henceforth employed in atoning for my guilty negligence. This I swear to you in the face of the Eternal Heaven, yes," he added, taking the governess's hand and pressing it; "this is an oath I swear to observe forever!"

"And I believe you, sir," replied Miss Mary, now supremely content, "yes, sir, I believe in this sacred oath!"

"Infamous oath! abominable as the mouth that dares to pronounce it! disgusting as the ears that dare to listen to it!" exclaimed the angry voice of Madame De Morville, who, having been informed by the housekeeper of the *rendezvous* between her husband and the governess, had hastened to the pavilion, and now dashed into the library precisely at the moment when, with her hand in M. De Mor-

ville's, Miss Mary repeated in pleased and feeling tones: "Yes, sir, I believe in this sacred oath!"

These words Madame De Morville interpreted as a reply to a declaration of love—a mistake natural enough if we only remember Madame Pivolet's malignant hints, and that the conversation between M. De Morville and Miss Mary took place in a lonely pavilion just as night was falling.

CHAPTER VII.

MADAME DE MORVILLE. PIVOLET EXPLODES HER CATASTROPHE.

In spite of the darkness that the approach of night began to spread in the library, M. De Morville could easily perceive the extreme paleness of his wife's features, and their agonized expression of unspeakable grief.

Miss Mary, more surprised than hurt at the insulting words uttered in a moment of senseless passion, remained calm and dignified.

"So then it was not false intelligence!" resumed Madame De Morville impetuously, looking in turn from her husband to her governess, "an evening *rendezvous!* in this lonely pavilion! with your daughter's governess! Ah! sir, if you have lost all shame for yourself, think at least on your children!"

"Louise!" exclaimed M. De Morville, "recollect yourself! Anger makes you crazy!—What! on the strength of a lying fool's story you are credulous enough to believe——"

"I believe, sir, what I see, and I see here in this pavilion my husband talking in secret to a woman who is not his wife!"

"Madame," said M. De Morville, trying to contain his anger, "I know the allowance that

must be made for the blind violence of your temper, but I shall never suffer you to insult and slander Mademoiselle O'Connor in my presence."

"Monsieur," said Miss Mary quickly, "if you entertain for me the respect that is my due, please don't undertake to defend me. I don't want to be the unhappy cause of an irritating discussion between you and Madame De Morville."

"Now, that's charming!" exclaimed the wife, with a burst of ironical laughter. "For the sake of a good understanding between husband and wife, Mademoiselle is willing to keep on playing her unworthy part in perfect tranquillity."

"Louise!" exclaimed M. De Morville, in spite of Miss Mary's supplicating gesture, "you're losing your senses! You don't know what you're saying!"

"Madame," said the governess, interrupting M. De Morville, and addressing his wife, "there are suspicions so odious, so absurd, that they cannot hurt an innocent heart. You are not at this moment mistress of yourself.—I shall make no reply to words that you will soon regret. Two years' residence here have taught me to know you, Madame, and if I have sometimes suffered in silence from the vivacity of your temper, I have often also had occasion to appreciate the goodness of your heart."

"Enough, Mademoiselle, enough! Do you think I'm the dupe of such base and hypocritical flattery?

Do you think to impose on me with this pretended submission?"

"I have no desire, Madame, but to convince you of your error. Speak then if you please, and I promise not to interrupt you until you have done."

This promise and Miss Mary's coolness, at first disconcerted Madame De Morville a little. As with all persons of violent tempers, her anger fed itself on resistance and contradiction, but it soon died out before calmness and silence. — However, her jealousies, her unreasonable spleens of all kinds, but particularly her conviction of her husband's love for the governess, were now strong enough to set her on fire again, and she exclaimed :—

"Be it so, Mademoiselle, you shall be satisfied, and since you, and likewise M. De Morville, permit me to speak, you shall know everything that gives me grievous trouble. And, first of all, permit me to tell you that you governesses are all alike. Once introduced into our families, you there acquire tastes and habits of comfort, even of luxury, that you should find it very difficult afterwards to renounce. So, to secure your position forever, you employ every means in your power, right and wrong, to get yourselves retained in the house after the necessity that brought you there at first, no longer exists. The young girl confided to your care is the object of your first seductions. Her education serves you as a pretext to isolate her from her parents, to monopolize her so as to render her a docile slave, reserving for your-

self to be hereafter her indispensable adviser, or perhaps her not over-scrupulous confidant. To arrive at this noble object, you must first keep the poor affectionate mother out of the way, and then by the aid of highly cultivated talents, excite odious comparisons, and thus crush her natural influence over the husband. Nothing easier than that. You are young, beautiful, enticing. The husband is at every moment within the sphere of your seductions. He is weak; you are cunning, hypocritical and persistent. Naturally enough, the head of the family is at last subdued and tyrannized over by a stranger, and he sacrifices his wife and children and every thing in the house to the crafty creature who soon becomes his ruler. But, unfortunately, Mademoiselle, it sometimes happens that the wives, though they can't pretend to rival in charms, graces, or talents the governess that they pay, still get tired at last of such impudence and such pretensions, and put an end to them by a very simple proceeding. Some fine morning, or still better, some fine evening, they say to the governess, whose odious projects are just detected: 'Mademoiselle O'Connor, this is my house!'" and Madame De Morville, arrived at the highest paroxysm of anger, pointing to the door with an insulting gesture, screamed out to Miss Mary: "Mademoiselle O'Connor, this is my house, and I order you——"

"Stop, Madame!" cried the young girl in a tone at once so imperious and imposing that Madame De Morville could not finish her sentence; "not a word

more, Madame, for your own sake, not for mine; for *I* am beyond the reach of your worst insults."

"For my own sake!" exclaimed Madame De Morville; "what do you mean, Mademoiselle? Is this a menace?"

"No, Madame, it is a prayer; I want to leave your house with the affection of your family and with *your* esteem; yes, Madame, with *your* esteem! That is why I beg you not to yield too hastily to a violent burst of temper which you would bitterly regret when too late. That is why I want you to hear me."

"My esteem! *mine!* Why, you must think me either very foolish or very cowardly, Mademoiselle O'Connor. My esteem! Esteem *you*, that brought misfortune and desolation into the family from the very day you came here, when my children were disinherited by their uncle, up to this very moment when you rob me of my husband's affection!"

"You accuse me, Madame, of robbing you of your husband's affection, and wanting to rule in your house? Very well. Here is my answer. Before a quarter of an hour you shall see the carriage, which M. De Morville has kindly placed at my orders, come here to take me to Tours, whence I shall start to-morrow for England."

"You start for England!" exclaimed Madame De Morville, overcome with astonishment.—Then she added: "No! it is a lie, a snare!"

"Louise!" said M. De Morville, "an hour ago, at the request of Miss Mary, I sent an order to the coachman to bring a carriage here. It will be at the park gate in a few moments."

Madame De Morville, whose anger now had nothing to grasp at, was completely disconcerted at this information.

"Now, Madame, I can confess," said the governess, "that my presence in your family *has* occasioned misfortunes which I profoundly regret, for I have been their involuntary cause."

"Involuntary or not," exclaimed Madame De Morville, "you've brought ill luck here; you are no 'godsend,' as, two years ago, I said to M. De Morville, who then, no doubt in anticipation, already took your part against me."

"Madame, in thus acting, M. De Morville only yielded to a natural feeling of justice. Was it right to make me responsible for misfortunes of which I am only, as I said before, the involuntary cause?"

"Who, then, is to bear the burden of such responsibility?"

"I have not forced you to ask that question, Madame. But it belongs to my dignity and my duty to reply to it. In the first place, however, permit me to observe that I do not believe in 'lucky' or 'unlucky' persons, or in any unpleasant fatality connected with my presence or my person."

"Still the facts are there, Mademoiselle. Unhappily for us, their existence cannot be questioned."

"Yes, Madame, the facts exist. Only I believe that my presence in *another* family would not have produced them. Allow me, Madame, to finish, if you please," added Miss Mary, in reply to an impatient gesture of Madame De Morville. "Do you think that, with all the pretended ill luck inseparable from me, if I had entered a family where each

one strictly observed his own serious duties, where certain incompatibilities of taste and amusement between the master and the mistress of the house, instead of being allowed to develop and to widen more and more every day without hindrance, had been restrained and tamed down by recollecting that a good example should be given to the children and a vigilant solicitude maintained over them—in such a family as *that*, Madame, would these misfortunes have occurred, for which *I* must now bear the blame?"

"Mademoiselle gives us a lecture then—to me, for neglecting my duties as a mother, and to you, Monsieur, for neglecting your duties as a father!"

"And Mademoiselle O'Connor is right," replied M. De Morville, in a serious tone. "I have been wrong in yielding to my lonely habits, and, instead of refusing your frequent offers to share in my solitary pursuits, I should have accepted them. With a few mutual concessions, I might have sacrificed a little more to the world, and you a little less. Instead of remaining entire months apart from each other, abandoning ourselves to the kind of life we preferred, and giving, it must be acknowledged, only secondary attention to the education of our children, we should have constantly surrounded our children with our cares, and then perhaps we would not have to reproach ourselves, as alas! we now must——"

"Excuse me for interrupting you, sir," said Miss Mary, quickly, "far from me be every idea of useless recrimination. I only wanted you to convince Madame De Morville that with all her good sense and all her good heart, she was still rather unjust in

believing in any *ill luck* attached to my presence in this house."

"All I know, Mademoiselle, is that we were perfectly quiet and happy before you came here," said Madame De Morville, bitterly, "and that now you go away leaving us in grief and trouble."

"Ah, Madame! the most miserable day of my life would be that on which I left your family with the sad conviction on my mind that my name should never be mentioned in your house without anger."

"Oh! Mademoiselle, that's all very fine, no doubt, but it's only eloquence after all. I'm willing to acknowledge that from what I have just learned, you appear to have been slandered with regard to M. De Morville: but still it is no less true that my children have been disinherited by their uncle, that my daughter is dying by inches, and that my son is so much changed that his own father could scarcely recognize him."

"One word more, Madame. You brought me here to complete your daughter's education. Now, I address myself to your honor. Have I done my duty?"

"My Heavens! Mademoiselle! I say the good as well as the bad. Yes, you have improved Alphonsine, even far beyond our utmost expectations. But that is not the question."

"Still, Madame, it was for that purpose alone that I entered your house. Therefore, I could justly reply that, having done my duty on that score, I'm exempt from all reproach. But that would not be enough to satisfy myself, Madame, and I now repeat, that I don't wish to leave grief and trouble behind

me; for, Madame, I can never forget the kindness of my reception in your house."

"Once more, Mademoiselle, these are only fine words, and merely fine words can't prevent my children from being disinherited by their uncle!"

"Monsieur De Botardière will change his hasty resolution, Madame. I can almost promise it."

"You, Mademoiselle?"

"Yes, Madame."

Madame De Morville shrugged her shoulders with an ironical smile, and added:—

"And of course, you'll cure my daughter, too, by enchantment?"

"I hope so, Madame, for her cure is already commenced. This is the reason that when begging you just now to restrain your insulting expressions, and assuring you that I wanted to depart with your affection and esteem, I said nothing but the truth. And that affection and esteem I'm sure you will hardly refuse me, from the moment that peace and happiness are once more restored to your family."

"Oh! to be sure; of course," said Madame De Morville, sourly and doubtingly; "but in the meantime, I see no reason for blessing the chance that ever brought you here, Mademoiselle."

The abrupt entrance of Madame Pivolet, followed by John Welsh, prevented further conversation. The housekeeper, addressing Miss Mary, said to her with a bustling and important air:

"Mademoiselle, everything is ready. The carriage is at the end of the avenue. I have put into it all your things, particularly your muff, your shawls and your cloak, for the night will be very

cold, Mademoiselle. Your trunk is nicely strapped up behind, but your carpet bag is inside, and it contains everything that was lying around in your room. Oh! nothing is forgotten, I promise you, my dear young lady."

"Miss Mary," said M. De Morville in a feeling but restrained tone, "you wish to leave us and we respect your wish; but leave us at least with the hope of seeing you again."

"I don't know, sir; but I hope, before quitting France, that I shall fulfil the promise I have just now had the honor to make to Madame De Morville."

With these words she saluted that lady with a deep courtesy. Madame De Morville, yielding to a return of her good nature, was on the point of begging Miss Mary to wait at least till morning, but soon overcome by her pride and spleen, she replied only by a hasty nod to the "Good-bye" of the governess, whom M. De Morville gazed on with almost a broken heart, as she went out calm, dignified and self-possessed, followed by John Welsh and the housekeeper.

Whilst Miss Mary hastened down the avenue leading to the gate of the park, where she could already see the two lighted lamps of the carriage, the housekeeper followed her, saying to herself in triumphant glee:

"At last, my *Belle Anglaise*, you are driven away in disgrace, and it's all my doings. But that's little to what awaits you on the banks of the '*Pond of the Shrieking Woman.*' Daddy Chênot and his crew are on the watch to give you a warm

reception, the light of the lamps will give notice of the carriage, Joseph won't interfere, and as to your *Islander* of an Englishman, what can *he* do one to six?"

Just as she got into the carriage, Miss Mary asked the driver:

"Joseph, how far is it from here to Loches?"

"About an hour's journey, Mademoiselle."

"And from Loches to the Château Botardière?"

"Not more than a few leagues, Mademoiselle."

"If I stop at the hotel of Loches to-night, can I find there a carriage to take me to-morrow morning to the Château Botardière?"

"Certainly, Mademoiselle. The Hotel de la Tour has a first-rate livery stable."

"Then, if you please, Joseph, instead of Tours, drive me to Loches."

"Yes, Mademoiselle," said the driver, as John Welsh took a seat by his side.

"What!!" screamed the housekeeper, as she saw the carriage disappearing rapidly in the distance, "she's going to Loches!! Then they'll not pass by the road where Daddy Chênot is expecting them! oh! must the infernal, confounded, doubly, trebly cursed *Anglaise* escape from me after all!!"

Rendered perfectly crazy and regardless of consequences by the thought that her victim would escape the well-contrived plot which had been for nearly two years the continual subject of

her thoughts by day and her dreams by night, the wicked creature rushed back to the stable, and ordered her creature Jean to get another carriage at once and drive her to the place of ambush on the road to Tours. Her idea was to send her myrmidons by a short cut across the country, which could easily be done, to a forest through which Miss Mary should pass on her way to Loches.

The result can be readily guessed. Daddy Chênot and his crew, seeing a carriage come from the expected direction, and not being able to recognize the housekeeper in the dark, knocked her senseless with blows, dragged her out of the vehicle by the hair of the head, kicked her and cuffed her, and flung her into the water. Indeed, they would probably have killed her outright only for the powerful bodily strength of Jean, who, at last, succeeded in rescuing her from their hands, though even then he had the greatest difficulty in convincing the infuriated, ignorant creatures, that their victim was Madame Pivolet, and not the "pestilent hag" they had been expecting. As it was, the housekeeper escaped with her life, but till her dying day her body bore the marks, and her soul ever shuddered at the thoughts, of the terrible hour she had passed on the gloomy banks of "*the Pond of the Shrieking Woman.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LION BEARDED IN HIS DEN.

THE Château Botardière, lying in the heart of the desolate table lands extending towards St. Maure, with its dark walls and gray shutters, its moat filled with stagnant water, its silent courtyard, and its great rusty iron gate nearly always shut, looks drearier and more inhospitable than ever this gloomy morning in February, but, however uninviting, it is the point to which the scene of our story now shifts.

Our old friend, Monsieur De Botardière, is seated in an arm chair near the fire-place, reading his favorite paper, the *Journal des Débats*. An old screen, forming a half circle in the middle of a large room with gray wainscoting, protects the eccentric old man from the icy currents that make their way in through four ill jointed, old fashioned windows, with small panes, and muslin curtains whose original color have once probably been yellow. Wearing an old whitey-brown suit of padded swanskin, his head wrapped in an old silk handkerchief, through the folds of which here and there sprouts up an occasional tuft of hair, white and thin, but still stiff

"As the bristles of the fretful porcupine,"

the old gentleman enjoys his fireside stretch the more comfortably as his feet are sheltered from the too great heat by big, thick, felt boots, very hairy out-

side and lined inside with cotton-wool. Thus seated in his soft arm-chair, toasting his toes on the and-irons, and dozing over his newspaper, he luxuriates as usual in the delights of his old-bachelorhood. At last, his thoughts begin to express themselves in words.

"It is true," says he, "that this kind of a life is not enormously amusing. My days are long; my evenings never come to an end; and as for my nights, I don't know how I ever get through them. Still, isn't it fine to think one is all alone with himself, the most congenial and indulgent company in the world; that nobody will come to put you in bad humor; that no pack of visitors will alight on you to feed on you like leeches, and to bore you to death besides with their interminable twaddle. In short, you live as you like, according to your own taste, going out and coming in when you please, no trouble to anybody and nobody a trouble to you! When my nephew used to come here with his family, or when I went to Morville, it was a little livelier, I must acknowledge. It was not seldom that I had even a right good time. I could say what I pleased, and I did say what I pleased to everybody, and no one dared to talk back to me. That's a pleasure to be met with only at the houses of relations who have a respect for your gray hair; for, elsewhere how shockingly they treat a man for only telling them the plain simple truth! What snappish, disrespectful answers they give you, vexatious enough to disgust you forever with sincerity! But at Morville, I could scold and grumble and growl, and growl and grumble and scold, over and over again, and there was

nobody ever to say me nay! But what a fool I am to regret such people, ungrateful, covetous wretches! How delightful it is to say: They are now raging, furious at being disinherited! Not a day passes that they do not think on the lost fortune with bitter regret. Besides, when I visited them, I always exposed myself to receive a visit from them or from somebody else in return—a *surprise*, as they called it. Now, if there's one thing under the sun that I detest more than another, it is a surprise visit. But, thanks be to God! I'm now delivered from such plagues and persecutions forever."

M. De Botardière had hardly uttered this daring renunciation of the world and its troubles, when he was startled by the shrill whistle of the porter down stairs, the signal that still, as in the old time, always announced a visitor.

He rose in his chair, threw down his paper, knitted his brows, and roared out in a loud voice:—

"Has any one the presumption to intrude himself here without writing for permission?"

Ambrose, the domestic, as old and as crotchety as his master, and as deaf as a post besides, now shuffled himself into the room, and put his head over the screen, saying:—

"Sir, it is a visitor."

"I'm not at home! I receive no visitors to-day!" exclaimed the old gentleman, ensconcing himself resolutely in his arm-chair.

"Sir, it is a young lady," said Ambrose, who had not heard a word that his master said, "a young English lady."

"An English lady!"

"And she comes from the Château Morville."

"English—and she comes from the Château Morville!" repeated M. De Botardière, surprised and exceedingly angry, "Oh! it is impossible! so much presumption is clearly impossible."

"And her name," continued Ambrose, "is Miss Mary."

"The adventuress! my persecutor during that infernal journey from Calais to Paris!" exclaimed the old gentleman, starting from his seat. "Drive her out of the house at once, and set the dogs after her!"

"Oh! she's not gone, sir; there's no need of running after her," said the old servant, turning around and making for the door, thinking that he had understood his master's words.

"Ambrose!" cried the old gentleman, "listen to me, you deaf old rascal! I don't want you to——"

"Yes, yes, sir! I understand you perfectly," cried Ambrose, disappearing, and his master had not half finished his volley, when he was again heard at the door, crying out:

"Enter, enter, Mademoiselle: Master is inside and very impatient to see you."

In a moment he had pushed aside one of the leaves of the screen, and M. De Botardière found himself face to face with Miss Mary. She was the first to speak.

"I hope, sir," said she, "you will excuse my visit as soon as you know the motive that compels me to make it."

"There can be no motive, Mademoiselle, for a

visit so uncalled for, so presumptuous, so audacious, so provoking, so ———"

"There, that's the very word, sir, *provoking*," interrupted Miss Mary with a merry smile. "I'm come to provoke, stir up, and call out all the generosity in your heart, sir. And I'm pretty certain you will reply creditably to my challenge."

"You're very much mistaken then, Mademoiselle. I'm not a bit generous, never was, and don't intend to be. I should like, indeed, to know when *you* ever saw any signs of my generosity."

"Oh! that is the same as saying you're not alive at all, simply because you live so retired that those who love and respect you can no longer see you. But I know better. I want to believe, and I do believe in the goodness of your heart. Is that a great crime!"

Miss Mary uttered these words so archly and gracefully, she looked so beautiful and charming that, in spite of his moroseness, Monsieur De Botardière could not help remarking that her very presence seemed to light up his cheerless, solitary den. Still, struggling apprehensively against such a thought, he answered in a surly, snapping manner:

"Mademoiselle, I don't like talking, especially talking with a woman. You've got into my house, I don't know how. What do you want?"

"Oh! my dear sir, nothing but what you'll find as easy as kiss hand. I only want you to be friends once more with your family."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the astounded old gentleman, hardly able to believe he had heard right. But suppressing for a moment his rising wrath, he added: "However, it is very well expressed, I like the style,

it is so clear, and right to the point. Others would have approached such an outrageous proposition by circumlocutions and other oratorical resources, but you——"

"Oh! I," interrupted Miss Mary, smiling, "in my character of an unfledged lawyer, relying on the goodness of my cause and the justice of my judge, knowing besides, that there are certain strong common sense natures not to be imposed on by mere words, I hit the nail right on the head at once."

"Better and better! So you're really come, Mademoiselle, to ask me to be friends once more with my nephew and his family?"

"Yes, sir."

"And also (since you have commenced so well), to ask me to leave them my property after my death?"

"Of course, sir."

"Of course! Ah! you consider it a matter of course, Mademoiselle. Phew!" Then bursting into a fit of ironical laughter, he added: "Good! I like a joke at times myself, and I must say it is a first-rate joke indeed to hear a detestable cause argued by an advocate——"

"Just as detestable," said Miss Mary with a merry laugh, interrupting the old man "But then you know, sir, equity don't require the judge to *love* the lawyer—only to *listen* to him."

"Oh! talk away, talk away. Only remember what you have just said, and indeed said very truly, that there are certain strong common sense characters not to be imposed on by mere words. Now I'm one of *them!* Remember that!"

In spite of this triumphant assertion, however, the old gentleman had begun to perceive, that his ear, so long accustomed only to the harsh, grating tones of old Ambrose and the other servants, felt a very decided pleasure in listening to the sweet, fresh, silvery accents of the young girl. But he was still as determined as ever to show himself intractable, though he did not see any harm in listening to the harmony of the charming voice, and accordingly he continued:

"I'm listening, Mademoiselle, I'm in fact curious to know how you're going to commence. Perhaps, to create a favorable impression on the judge, you will open the discourse with an allusion to that infernal journey from Calais."

"If I did allude to it, sir, it would be simply to express my regret, my sincere regret, at not having thought of placing myself under your protection during the journey."

"What an idea!"

"If I, a stranger, unprotected, and a woman, had addressed myself to your courtesy as a Frenchman, and your humanity as a Christian, would you have refused me?"

"I don't know anything at all about it."

"Ah! you don't say you would, and you're right, for, in spite of your whims and freaks, often unjust, your heart is still sound and good."

"Oh! humbug. Don't think such stuff as that shall fool me."

"It is stuff to say your heart is good!"

"Of course it is."

"Didn't you once love, didn't you once tenderly love your sister?"

"Oh! *her*, yes," replied the old man, yielding to an involuntary emotion. "Oh! yes, I did love her, tenderly love her."

"I believe you, sir. Your emotion tells it plainly enough."

"Emotion! Mademoiselle, what are you talking about?" hastily answered the old gentleman, afraid she was gaining some advantage over him. "Nothing like emotion about me, never was—I'm not one of that kind."

"Why deny it?"

"Oh! I see what you're at. You would conclude that since I tenderly loved my sister, I should also love my nephew, with his wife and children. But, by Jove! that's quite a different thing! Love ingrates, harpies, that never think of anything but how soon I shall drop off and how much I'll leave them!"

"Sir, these words are wrong; they are unjust, unwarranted and unreasonable!"

"Mademoiselle! this is the first time any one ever took the liberty to tell me——"

"The truth, sir. Perhaps it is, but you see it is my way, and I can't help it. However, have the kindness to answer this question.—What was the cause of your rupture with your nephew? My arrival at the château, wasn't it?"

"Certainly."

"If they had consented not to receive me as governess, you would not have broken off with them?"

"No."

"In a word, it was my presence alone at the château that prevented you from returning there?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle—yes!"

"Then, sir, there is nothing to keep you any longer from yielding to the dearest wishes of your family. I have left the Château Morville forever."

"What! you're governess there no longer?"

"No longer, sir; but, one word more. You blame M. De Morville for the greediness which, as you say, makes him covet your inheritance. But, if this were the case, if M. De Morville and his wife had really been venal, mercenary creatures, would they have hesitated a moment about sacrificing me, when you told them that if they did not do so they should be disinherited?"

"But what does all that prove! That they preferred to persist stubbornly and obstinately in their own way of thinking, rather than by yielding a little, to come in for my inheritance!"

"Ah! now, sir, we are beginning to understand each other. Your nephew and his wife then are no longer mere greedy, selfish creatures, but people who persisted stubbornly and obstinately in their own way of thinking, as you say; in other words, who refused to drive out of their house, without listening to a word of explanation, a poor young foreigner girl who, in exchange for the education which she came to give their child, asked in return from them *bread*, sir; yes, sir, *bread* to keep from starvation an old father and mother and four young sisters, that she had left behind her in a distant land with the pious hope of being able to render their misfortunes less

intolerable. Now, sir, speak," added Miss Mary with a most touching voice that deeply affected M. De Botardière in spite of himself, "speak and say if Monsieur and Madame De Morville, by being simply just towards me, have deserved ill of you?"

"Mademoiselle, if that was the state of things, I acknowledge indeed——" But recovering himself, and making a new effort to shake off the charm of Miss Mary's presence and words, the old man added roughly—"But why didn't my nephew and niece tell me all about that story?"

"They sent their children to you, sir, but you would not see them. After such a reception, what could your niece and nephew do? You suspected them of covetousness, and their dignity, of course, prevented them from taking very active measures for a reconciliation. You *would* see in everything only a venal purpose."

"I don't deny it—but still——"

"One word more, sir. You acknowledge that in refusing to yield to your request, your relatives were actuated by an honorable sentiment. Unfortunately, my person, my presence was odious to you."

"Odious! odious! oh! Mademoiselle, the expression is too strong."

"Well, displeasing, if you like that better."

"Displeasing! still too strong, Mademoiselle!"

"Disagreeable, troublesome, unpleasant, that's the word, isn't it?"

"Not at all, Mademoiselle, not at all! I assure you!"

"Well, anyway I've left the Château Morville

for ever. Now, why should you struggle any longer against the generous sentiment that attracts you to your own flesh and blood, who have always surrounded you with love and the deepest respect?"

"What! you think me weak enough to wish to ever see the ingrates again?"

"I think, sir, that not a day passes that you don't say to yourself:—'Ah! what fine times I used to have when I went to the Château Morville! To be sure I was often a little rough there, and growled occasionally, but all my grumbling did not prevent me from having a good heart at bottom, and it deprived me of no one's affection. They always received me there with as much warm cordiality as deferential respect.' And they were right in doing so, sir, for M. De Morville looked on this grumbler as the brother of a sainted mother, and on the sole condition of letting them love and respect you, you had the right to grumble and growl as much as ever you pleased——"

"Mademoiselle, permit me——"

"Oh! no, no! to such a sweet domestic happiness you cannot possibly prefer an oppressive, stupifying loneliness! Don't deny it, sir! I know you regret heartily those old friendly terms which the affectionate deference of M. De Morville and his wife and children rendered so delightful. Now, sir, be sincere. What kind of an existence do you lead here? A cold, dead, cheerless, monotonous life, without attraction for the heart, without a charm for the head. Dis-

contented with yourself and others, your best days are those when nothing disturbs your melancholy gloom. Leave such a morose and solitary existence to those whom an unhappy fate has deprived of the ineffable joys of domestic life. Make the most of them yourself, and don't be so ungrateful to the dear kind God that has given you the opportunity!"

The old gentleman had listened to Miss Mary with increasing emotion: her grace, her candor, her judgment, her good temper, and particularly her remarkable beauty, were making an impression upon him as profound as it was sudden and unexpected.

"Mademoiselle," he all at once exclaimed, after a few moments' reflection, "will you answer my questions sincerely?"

"I cannot answer them otherwise, sir."

"I'm no fool, I know my nephew, and, whatever the grounds for my complaints against him may be, I acknowledge that he is a man of excellent judgment. I had against you a very strong prejudice, I also acknowledge; if my nephew kept you two years in his house as governess, of course such prejudice must be groundless. Besides, I've heard from other sources that you have made my niece quite an accomplished young lady."

"I hope you will soon have an opportunity of judging for yourself, sir."

"That's not the question. Why do you leave them? Miss Mary, you are sincere. — Speak to me then, I beg of you, without disguise."

"I left the château, sir, for two reasons: first, because Alphonsine's education is nearly completed: second, because——"

"You hesitate. Second, because they have not treated you as you deserved. Isn't that it?"

"Sir——"

"They rendered you unhappy; I suspected as much."

"Sir, have the kindness to hear me."

"No, but do you have the kindness to listen to me, Mademoiselle!" cried the old man, getting angry. "Ah! they persecuted you, did they? I'm not surprised at it: just like them. But no matter, you just be said and led by me, and, if you like, you shall be fully revenged on them, and I too."

"Sir, I don't quite understand you."

"Miss Mary, I take you to be an honorable and well-conducted young woman."

"I try to be so at least."

"You have no fortune?"

"No, sir."

"You love your dear family?"

"Oh! with all my heart and soul!"

"You would be delighted to see them all, father, mother, and sisters, happy and comfortable?"

"It is the dearest wish of my heart."

"Well, Miss Mary, you have it in your power to secure their happiness and your own, and you shall have, into the bargain, the pleasure of being revenged on my rascally nephew and his family, who did not know how to treat you with proper respect."

"Indeed, sir, I assure you——"

"Miss Mary!" exclaimed the old gentleman, casting a dissatisfied look on his suit of swan-skin, "I know I can never make you comprehend my arguments in the present state of my toilet. I know I'm a perfect fright just now.—Give me time to get shaved and fixed up a little, and then indeed——"

Interrupting himself, he ran to the door and cried out:

"Ambrose! Ambrose! go wait for me in my bed-chamber."

Then he ran back towards the governess, who could make nothing of his extraordinary movements, saying:

"Excuse me, Miss Mary, if I leave you by yourself; I'll return in a quarter of an hour, and then," he added with a triumphant air, "I shall explain myself categorically!" and having emphasized the adverb in a way that he thought quite significant, he rushed out of the room, crying:

"Ambrose! Ambrose! he don't hear me—the deaf old rascal!"

Miss Mary was astonished at this precipitate departure.

"I don't understand his words at all," said she to herself; "Where is he gone? Why leave me alone in this strange house? I'm sorry I did not tell him that I had written to Henry O'Reilly to call here for me, and that I expect him now at any moment. In spite of myself, I am very much in dread of some new freak of M.

De Favrolle's, so I don't think I have infringed too much on M. De Botardière's hospitality by appointing his house as a place for meeting with my natural protector."

At this moment she heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs on the pavement of the courtyard.

"'Tis he! 'Tis Henry!" she exclaimed. "He has taken a horse, and preceded the carriage, so as to be here sooner."

And, never doubting that it was her future husband, from whom she had been separated more than three years, her heart beat so violently, she felt herself so overcome, that she could not advance a step, though she heard somebody hastily coming up stairs, who she was certain could only be Henry O'Reilly.

What was her stupefaction then, when, in place of her dearest friend, so impatiently expected, she saw M. De Favrolle enter the room, deathly pale, exhausted, but resolute, his clothes covered with mud, announcing that he had just taken a long and desperate ride on horseback!

CHAPTER IX.

MORE VISITORS AT THE DEN.

Miss Mary, as terribly disappointed in her expectation as she was frightened at M. De Favrolle's sudden arrival, felt herself suddenly becoming faint, and was hardly able to utter a slight shriek of terror. De Favrolle advanced, cool and resolute, saying:—

"At last, Mademoiselle, I have found you after a night spent in a most laborious and painful search. Some accident had befallen the housekeeper, and the other servants thought you had started for Tours. Your move was rather a brilliant one, but you see I have checkmated you. Don't be alarmed, however. In spite of a little natural irritation, I shall never fail in the least particle of the respect that is your due. But the more courteous and respectful you find me, the more determined shall you find me also with regard to the project already announced to you, and which no human power shall now prevent me from fully carrying out."

Miss Mary, overwhelmed at this unexpected blow, lost all courage, fell on the chair, and murmured in a voice interrupted by tears:—

"Ah! sir, if you only knew how much I suffer, indeed you would pity me!"

"Good Heaven, Mademoiselle, I am neither a tyrant nor a scoundrel! In the house we were in

yesterday, some point of honor, I know not what, prevented you from listening to me. But here you are free. I want to know my fate then. For I assure you I shall never lose sight of you until it is irrevocably decided, and no human interference——"

Miss Mary started; a shudder shot through her like lightning. She heard a carriage in the yard. This time there could be no doubt of it,—it *was* Henry O'Reilly. The thought of the terrible misfortunes that might spring from a meeting between two such men on such an occasion, deprived her of her reason for a few moments. When she came to herself she saw Henry O'Reilly's calm and manly face as he entered the room, introduced, not by Ambrose, but by another servant, who was, no doubt, greatly astonished at such an extraordinary number of visitors at the gloomy Château Botardière.

Miss Mary could not repress a faint cry at the sight of her lover: her swimming eyes were fixed with tenderness and anguish on that fine, grave countenance which had been so long and so far away from her sight. Walking up to her all the way, for she was unable to move a step, Major O'Reilly stretched out his two hands, into which the young girl let hers fall without saying a word, while the silent tears coursed each other down her cheeks.

M. De Favrolle had been a surprised spectator of this unexpected scene, and now made a slight movement. The Major, turning around, perceived him for the first time, and, slightly disconcerted at having let his emotion be witnessed by a third party, he stepped back, and by a graceful and respectful salute, endeavored to atone as well as he could for his in-

voluntary forgetfulness. Then, pointing to Miss Mary, he said simply and earnestly:—

"Sir, it is the first time in three years that I have seen my dear young friend and countrywoman, Mademoiselle Mary O'Connor. I hope then, sir, that you will kindly excuse me for not having remarked your presence sooner," and he bowed once more.

M. De Favrolle, assured that a military man, and a rival to boot, stood before him, returned the bow with much ceremony, and stammered a few of those insignificant phrases that we never finish when we wish to be polite without exactly knowing what to say.

Miss Mary had regarded the gestures of the two young men with anxiety, and she now half thought she could, by a bold step on her part, avert the threatening danger. Starting up then, she advanced a few paces towards M. De Favrolle, saying to him as she pointed at Henry:

"Sir, I have the honor to present to you Major Henry O'Reilly. He had been affianced to me in happier times; and as he has continued to love me in spite of the misfortunes that have overwhelmed my family, he now comes to take me to Ireland to marry me there with my father's blessing."

"To whom have I the honor of being introduced?" asked the Major of Miss Mary.

"Monsieur De Favrolle," replied the governess, "the son of an old friend of Monsieur De Morville's, whose daughter, my dear and esteemed pupil, he is shortly going to marry."

"Mademoiselle," said De Favrolle, pale with

vexation and resentment, "since you have defined so clearly your relations towards this gentleman, I can do no less than define with equal clearness mine towards you." Then he added, turning to the Major: "For a while, sir, it is true, I *was* the accepted suitor of Mademoiselle De Morville, but in that family I met for the second time Miss Mary, with whom I had the honor of travelling, two years ago, from Calais to Paris, and——"

"What, sir, is it you!" said O'Reilly, quickly interrupting him with a smile of cordial gratitude. "It's you that watched over Mademoiselle O'Connor with a brother's solicitude during that long journey. Ah! sir, how happy I am to have the opportunity of expressing the deep and lasting gratitude of her family for your noble and delicate conduct. Permit me to take your hand——"

With these words the Major extended his hand towards M. De Favrolle, but at this moment a loud and angry but smothered knocking at some door not far distant, which they had heard occasionally for some time past, and which sounded as if made by somebody locked up in a room and wanting to get out, became all at once so loud and so angry and accompanied with such violent roaring and stamping, that it attracted the attention of the three personages, and made them turn their heads for a moment towards the quarter whence the sound seemed to proceed. But such an incident could not long disturb their anxious and passionate emotions. Miss Mary had remarked with terror that, at the moment when the Major had so cordially offered his hand to M. De Favrolle, the latter, far

from corresponding with such a friendly advance, had smiled in disdain, as he eyed O'Reilly from head to foot. The Major, however, had not noticed his rival's insolent and aggressive attitude, having at the moment turned his head towards the noise. Still, sustained by a last faint glimmering of hope, as soon as all had recovered from the momentary distraction, Miss Mary said to her affianced:

"Oh! yes indeed, Henry, I shall never, never forget M. De Favrolle's noble and generous conduct towards a poor, unprotected stranger during that long journey."

"Permit me, then, to take your hand, sir," said the Major cordially, again offering his hand to M. De Favrolle, "and to express the gratitude of Miss Mary's family and my own."

"Sir," said M. De Favrolle with *hauteur*, drawing himself back with a supercilious movement, "before taking your hand I must first inform you of certain circumstances that were the consequence of that journey. When you have heard me, sir, you shall see, as I do, that the expression of any gratitude on your part is at least premature."

Miss Mary was again ready to faint at the coming danger that she now saw herself perfectly powerless to ward off. O'Reilly, very much surprised at De Favrolle's answer, which he did not as yet look upon as a studied insult, questioned Miss Mary with a glance for an account of such conduct; but, getting no reply, he said to De Favrolle with polished dignity:—

"It will be difficult for me, sir, and even painful,

to believe that I was wrong in thanking you for your courtesy towards Mademoiselle O'Connor."

"Sir," replied De Favrolle, "Mademoiselle O'Connor has told you the truth. A project of marriage *has* been agreed upon between Mademoiselle De Morville and me. But Mademoiselle O'Connor has not told you that, on finding her at the Château Morville, the warm and respectful love with which she had inspired me during that journey, was rekindled more strongly and violently than ever. Accordingly, I am decided on every extremity—you understand, sir,—I am decided on every extremity to obtain Mademoiselle O'Connor's hand."

"Well, sir," said the Major with perfect coolness, after listening to his rival with much attention, "I only see in your words the proof of a sentiment very honorable to you and to Miss Mary. You love her? I'm not surprised. I know it is hard to do anything else. You wish to marry her? That is still less surprising, as I have myself precisely the same wish. The only thing that remains to be known is, if Miss Mary will have you."

"Sir," cried De Favrolle, more and more irritated with his rival's easy, cool demeanor, "I love Miss Mary as deeply and as honorably as you do. My name is as good as yours. My position in the world is equal to yours. Therefore, I don't see why you should be preferred to me."

"As to that, sir," said the Major, as cool and self-possessed as ever, "I still think you are perfectly right. Your courtesy towards Mademoiselle O'Connor during the journey proves that you are a gentleman, and that your love for a young lady so worthy

of respect, cannot be otherwise than highly honorable. As to your name and position in the world, they must be respectable, since Monsieur and Madame De Morville consented to give you their daughter's hand. Therefore, sir, our claims on Miss Mary's affections are perfectly equal. Her choice is free—and she grants me the preference. This preference cannot possibly be considered offensive towards you, so I really don't see why you have refused the hand I offered you, and offered you very cordially too, I assure you."

"In France, sir," cried De Favrolle, rendered completely beside himself by O'Reilly's calm good sense, "in France, sir, we never take a rival's hand before we have crossed swords with him."

"Ah! sir," exclaimed Miss Mary, bursting into tears, "what have I done to deserve this cruelty?"

Major O'Reilly endeavored by a gesture to calm her grief, and addressing himself to De Favrolle, said with cold dignity:

"In France as in Ireland, sir, gentlemen never give light expression to serious words, particularly when such words unjustly pain a lady worthy of our highest respect."

This is what fell from his tongue, but his eye said still more plainly:

"I am always at your orders, only don't alarm Miss Mary."

Then, certain that he had been understood, he continued:—"I believe, as well as you, sir, that rivals who have serious reasons for enmity, may and should appeal to arms; but I am sure, sir, that, quite as anxious as myself to dispel the

alarm of Mademoiselle O'Connor, who must have mistaken the meaning of your words, you unite with me in saying there is nothing whatever in our position to give rise to an issue which she seems to dread."

"I fully agree with you, sir; for I am equally desirous to give the young lady no unnecessary alarm," answered De Favrolle, emphasizing his double-sensed phrase to show his rival that he had guessed and appreciated his secret thought.

Miss Mary, recovering from her terrible fear, dried her tears and, in the exuberance of her joy, said to De Favrolle, in a voice trembling with emotion—

"Excuse me, sir, for having for a moment doubted your generous heart."

M. De Favrolle bowed, smiling with a constrained air and only half concealing his anger, when the same knocking that had so often attracted their attention before, was now renewed with redoubled noise and violence.

"Whoever is locked up there should be let out, I think," said De Favrolle; but he had scarcely uttered the words, the noise only becoming still louder, when the door of the apartment was suddenly flung open, and Alphonsine and Gérard hastily rushed into the room.

The young girl looked around for an instant for her governess, then in a moment she was in her arms, exclaiming:

"Oh! here she is! here she is! the dear good Miss Mary! Thank God, we can at least bid her good bye!"

CHAPTER X.

ALPHONSINE.

At the sight of Alphonsine, and thinking on his position towards Miss Mary and Major O'Reilly, De Favrolle had felt his situation to be so false and so painful, that, almost in spite of himself, he slipped immediately behind the screen, and thus in a moment completely escaped the eyes of Gérard and his sister.

Without remarking the Major's presence, Alphonsine still remained in the arms of her governess, embracing her tenderly, and saying—

"Oh, the bold, bad, wicked, naughty Miss! to run off from us this way, without telling us one word of her intention!"

"It was only early this morning that on questioning Joseph," added Gérard, "we learned that you had passed the night in the hotel at Loches. Alphonsine and I drove there immediately, and we were told that you had taken a carriage to my uncle's."

"And, of course, we followed you," said Alphonsine, "even at the risk of encountering uncle's terrible resentment. But, now that I think of it, where then is that dear, awful uncle? I'm prepared for everything from his hands———"

She did not finish, for she had just perceived

Major O'Reilly. She gazed at him in silence for a second or two, and then, giving Miss Mary a keen glance, she said with a bright smile:

"Oh! that's HE, isn't it?"

Then advancing towards the affianced of her governess with the ease and grace that nearly always accompanies unaffected simplicity, she said:

"Sir, you don't know me, but I know you and love you very much—ever since yesterday morning," she added with a meaning glance at her governess, "for yesterday morning I learned that it is on you depends all the happiness that our dear Miss Mary deserves."

Thus speaking, she gracefully offered her hand to O'Reilly, who kept it in his for a few moments, replying to her in a tone of mild gravity.

"O yes, Mademoiselle, I do know you. I know that you are Mademoiselle O'Connor's pride and darling. All her family knows you too, and loves you, and a week ago, when I was starting for France, the last words of her honored father, her mother and sisters were—'Tell Mademoiselle Alphonsine that we love her like our own daughter, like our own sister, and that we shall never forget how, thanks to the goodness of her heart and the gentleness of her soul, she has rendered her task an easy and delightful employment to the poor young exile that is now returning to us.'"

When he had said these affectionate words, he bowed and respectfully kissed the young girl's hand. Alphonsine blushed with pleasure, two tears glittered in her eyes, and she said to Miss Mary:—

"You have spoken of me then in your letters?"

"Why not confide to those we love whatever good

fortune may befall us?" replied the governess, affectionately.

Monsieur De Favrolle, still concealed from the new arrivals and plunged in his gloomy reflections, had been flattered almost in spite of himself with the homage paid by Major O'Reilly to *his* Alphonsine, the charming creature that he was bound by every consideration of honor to have long since married.

Miss Mary, taking Gérard by the hand, presented him to the Major, saying: "Henry, I have the honor to present to you Monsieur Gérard De Morville, the brother of my dear Alphonsine."

"Although it is the first time we meet, we are old acquaintances, too, sir," said the Major cordially. "Mademoiselle O'Connor has often told me how much she thought of her pupil's brother: so I should think myself highly honored indeed, Monsieur Gérard, if you grant me your friendship with as much pleasure as I offer you mine."

Gérard, surprised as well as touched that Miss Mary should speak of him in her letters in such terms as would induce a man of Major O'Reilly's age and distinction to solicit his friendship, found in this proof of affectionate esteem a sweet consolation for the bitter sufferings that his wild passion for Miss Mary had heretofore caused him. With a glance then at her and his sister, which both understood very well, he replied to the Major:—

"Sir, Miss Mary often told my sister and myself that the esteem of a noble heart was often sufficient reward either for our good intentions or for our noble resignation in the difficult conjunctures of our

life. But I did not expect to find her wise words so soon realized."

"Nor I either, Monsieur Henry,—and you render brother and sister very proud and very happy, I assure you," said Alphonsine cheerfully, almost gaily, surprising Miss Mary very much, for she could not forget the young girl's deep-rooted love for M. De Favrolle.

This did not escape Alphonsine, for she now smiled at her pointedly, saying:—

"I divine the cause of your surprise, my dear Miss Mary: but, you see, since yesterday, ever so many things have taken place!"

"All to be kept secret, dear child?"

"Oh! not at all! quite the contrary. Yesterday evening, you know, supposing that I should never see you again, I first began a-crying, and after a good long cry I then began a-thinking. I saw that the course of my life must now undergo a change, since I was no longer to have the dear guide whose footsteps I had till then tried to follow so closely. So, how do you think I passed the first night of our separation? In going over and in finding in my heart all your lessons and counsels. You had given them to me so prettily and so tenderly that at the time I had supposed them to be nothing but charming conversations. Judge then of my happiness and surprise when I felt, to my great encouragement, that these excellent germs, sown by you during nearly two years, had sprung up within me, grown up and borne good fruit. Then, perhaps for the first time, my dear Miss Mary, did I understand and bless you for the good education you had given me. Do you

wish for a proof, Monsieur Henry, of the salutary influence of her instructions and example? Only imagine, that one day I took it into my head—can you believe it?—to be jealous,—yes, jealous of Miss Mary———"

Whilst Alphonsine spoke these words, the governess was casting very anxious glances towards the screen where De Favrolle was still concealed, and the Major also, remembering that that gentleman was Mademoiselle De Morville's affianced, fully shared in Miss Mary's anxiety.

"I don't deny my jealousy, Monsieur Henry," Alphonsine went on to say, with touching simplicity. "I acknowledge it, and I do so as much to punish myself for having yielded to the odious sentiment, as to render homage to Miss Mary's honor and the courage I have derived from her instructions. Oh! but for them I should have long continued to be a suffering victim of the green-eyed monster! But, Miss Mary had but to say one word to me, and that was enough. How could I help believing her? But, that's not all, Monsieur Henry,—you will see in a moment how profitable her instructions have been to me."

"My dear child," remonstrated the governess, becoming, as well as the Major, more and more uneasy on M. De Favrolle's account, seeing the turn the conversation was taking, "what is the use of talking of the past?"

"What is the use, dear Miss Mary?" said Alphonsine, "why, simply to tell him who tenderly loves you, how much I'm indebted to you, so that he may love you the more. So, Monsieur Henry, on learn-

ing that Miss Mary had been preferred to me, at first I felt as much grief as humiliation. But after a while, my reason, my heart, my courage, completely suppressed such disagreeable sentiments. I asked myself how I *could* be angry, or even surprised that the preference should be given to Miss Mary.—Was she not my superior in everything—knowledge, accomplishments, talents, charms, wit, beauty? So I could easily understand that, in choosing between light and its reflection, M. De Favrolle should have naturally preferred Miss Mary."

At these words, Major O'Reilly mechanically cast his eyes on his rival, whom from his position in the room he could easily see, though he was invisible to the others. But De Favrolle, yielding more and more to the charms of the innocent young creature whom he had for a moment been so foolish as to disdain, was now listening to her with increasing interest.

Alphonsine, misunderstanding the Major's movement, said abruptly:

"I will put an end to your astonishment in two words, Monsieur Henry. A marriage had been agreed upon between me and the son of my father's old friend. At the idea of this marriage I was happy, oh! very happy indeed. But M. De Favrolle, finding Miss Mary at our house, forgot me and loved her. What more simple? At least you, Monsieur Henry, can easily understand such a preference."

"My dear Alphonsine," said the governess, profoundly affected at such words, "what a truly noble heart is yours!"

"Have *you* not taught me to be modest, my dear

Miss Mary? Have you not also taught me that in life, very often the best thing we can do is to resign ourselves passively to our suffering, like Our Dear Lady, the Mother of our Blessed Redeemer? Accordingly, what have I done? Having seen that M. De Favrolle, without any fault on his part, loved you better than me, I felt that it was only my duty to give back to M. De Favrolle the engagement that he had entered into with our family."

"What!" cried Gérard, "Alphonsine, you want to——"

"How!" said Alphonsine, in a tone of friendly reproach, as she interrupted her brother, "you're surprised that I am the first to break an engagement made in other times, under other circumstances? What would you have, my poor brother? every thing is changed. This project, once so full of promises of happiness for me, has become to-day only a cause of trouble, vexation and embarrassment for Monsieur De Favrolle."

"Because M. De Favrolle has broken his word," said Gérard bitterly. "It's his own fault!"

"My poor brother!" replied Alphonsine, in a faltering voice, for she thought of the love which he himself had felt for Miss Mary, "I cannot help pitying from my heart those who love or have loved hopelessly. Miss Mary's departure will be a cruel blow to M. De Favrolle, and in the midst of his affliction, I shall at least spare him the trouble and mortification of an explanation, by giving him back his promise. May he only find a companion to love him as much as I would have loved him! and—why not say it?—as much as I still love him!" she added

in a broken voice, replying to a monitory gesture of her governess, who was all the time thinking on M. De Favrolle, the invisible spectator of the scene.

That gentleman, vividly moved at the sight of love so artless, so dignified, so resigned, began to regret bitterly the foolish whim to which he had sacrificed perhaps the happiness of his life, and he listened to the charming young creature with indescribable emotion, as he recognized in her all the rare qualities of head and heart that he had so much admired in Miss Mary.

Alphonsine continued, addressing her governess and her brother:—

"Yes, why not acknowledge that I still love M. De Favrolle? Four months ago, father, mother, and you yourself, brother, told me to love him. Has he lost since then any of those qualities that you praised so much? Should he be less esteemed, less honored, because he loves Miss Mary? No, no, on the contrary, such a preference exalts him in my eyes, and now I wish to free him from his promise——"

"Don't do anything of the kind!" cried De Favrolle himself, starting from his hiding place; "on the contrary, Mademoiselle, permit him, he implores you, to fulfil as strictly as possible the engagement he has been so fortunate as to make with your family! This is all he wants, he will accept no less, and he is only enraged with himself for ever entertaining any other idea for a moment!"

The young girl could not restrain a scream of surprise, and she hid her blushing face in Miss Mary's arms.

"You here!" cried Gérard. "You, Théodore, were there all the time!"

"Yes, yes, I have heard everything," said De Favrolle, wiping his eyes; "yes, *dear brother*, I have heard everything. Ah! the noble-hearted and generous creature! And I have been capable of misunderstanding her! Gérard, do you think she *can* pardon me? Ah! I should only be too happy to devote my life to the task of making her forget all the trouble I have caused her!"

"I shall ask your pardon, dear Théodore, and I'm not without good hope," said Gérard, approaching his sister, who, still in Miss Mary's arms, rested her head on her shoulder. De Favrolle then advanced towards Major O'Reilly, saying:—

"Sir, a gentleman should never be ashamed to acknowledge being in the wrong. I have been so towards you, I confess, and I hope you will forget it."

"It is already forgotten, sir. I can only remember your kindness towards Miss Mary on her first arrival in France. I have already offered you my hand; permit me now to offer it again."

They were cordially shaking hands when Alphonsine, to whom Gérard had been whispering, not daring to lift her head, murmured to her governess, in a broken voice:—

"Dear Miss Mary, if I resemble you, may he not finally love me? Tell me so and I shall readily believe it."

The governess was going to reply, when the door opened again, and Monsieur and Madame De Mor-

ville entered the room. De Favrolle immediately advanced towards them, and said:—

"Sir and Madame, I implore you in the name of your daughter's happiness, and I may now say in the name of mine, have the kindness to pardon and forget a wicked but momentary folly and infatuation on my part, and consent to my early marriage with Mademoiselle Alphonsine."

All reply was for a while rendered impossible by the loud cries and execrations uttered by M. De Botardière in the neighboring passage, which could now be plainly heard by all the company, Monsieur and Madame De Morville having left the door open.

CHAPTER XI.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

To judge from his words, M. De Botardière must have been in a furious passion.

"Stupid scoundrel! You infernal old rascal! Deaf old villain! to leave me locked up in my room more than an hour!"

"You see, sir, the wind blew the door to, and as it was a spring lock, and the key being outside, it stands to reason that——"

"I know all that very well. Do you think I'm as stupid as yourself, not to know how I got locked in?"

"And then, you see, sir, if it was the wind locked you in, it was no fault of mine!"

"Yes, but haven't I been hammering away, and stamping, and roaring loud enough the last half hour, to split the walls, you deaf old idiot!"

"You must be mistaken a little, I think, sir, I heard no knocking at all, only a little *leetle* noise. I thought it was a shutter rattling. So it stands to reason, sir, that you didn't call at all, sir, for if you did, I should have certainly run to let you out, sir."

"Did any one ever hear such a stupid animal! He actually says I did not knock, though I haven't left a bit of skin on my knuckles! But there's no use in talking to the old driveller. Listen to me: Is that young lady still in the parlor?"

"A young baby killed in the arbor!! oh! Lord! I guess not, sir; I haven't seen it. But I'll go and try."

"Come back here, you confounded, asinine, bothered, infernal old miscreant! I ask you," roared Monsieur De Botardière in a voice loud enough to lift the roof off, "Is Miss Mary still in the par-lor!! Do you hear me now?"

"Yes, sir, only there's no good in shouting loud enough to be heard a league off. Yes, sir, of course she is still in the parlor, and all the others too."

"How, all the others!" cried the old gentleman, astounded. "Why, who are the others?"

"Surely smothered? who! the baby, sir? I guess there's no baby at all, sir, and I'm sure I can't tell what has put such an idea into your head."

"Go to Pluto, you deaf old maniac!"

The old gentleman rushed into the parlor, where, to his great surprise and delight, he found Miss Mary all alone—as he thought, for, profiting by the few moments of his conversation with Ambrose, she had induced the rest of the company to conceal themselves for a short time behind the screen.

"What does the old fool mean by all the others?" muttered M. De Botardière between his teeth, but, immediately assuming an air the most gallant and captivating, he advanced towards the governess, saying:—

"My dear Miss Mary, I can now explain to you the meaning of my parting words. I regret infinitely to have kept you so long waiting, but it was all the fault of my stupid servant Ambrose, who

kept me locked up in my room for more than an hour!"

But the governess had already guessed the meaning of his parting words, seeing that he had changed his old swanskin suit for an elegant dress of black cloth, with a cravat and waistcoat rivalling his shirt in dazzling whiteness. She had now only the last part of her task to accomplish,—to reconcile the old gentleman to his relations, according to the promise she had made to Madame De Morville. The hope of success redoubled her courage, and she said to the old gentleman, as with a smile and a smirk he took a chair beside her, and got ready to tell her why he had changed his swanskin for black broadcloth:———

"Sir, is it all the same to you if we continue our conversation in the next room?"

"Certainly, Mademoiselle, but———"

"In that case, sir, please have the kindness to accompany me," replied Miss Mary passing before him, for she knew his self-respect would be incurably wounded if he ever learned that his *tête-à-tête* with the governess had taken place before concealed spectators.

"My dear young lady," said the old gentleman when they were comfortably seated in the next room, "a man of gallantry considers it his duty always to conform himself to the wishes, even to the caprices of the ladies. I do so, and show it by my readiness to give up my will to yours and to carry on our conversation here instead of the parlor where we had commenced it. Now, in two words, here's what I have to say.—I am sixty years of age, and

have precisely sixty thousand francs a year. My loneliness I consider henceforth perfectly insupportable if I don't share it with you. I will receive your honored family with all the respect that is their due, if they are willing to come to live here. I would look on them all as my dearest children and relations, and should never pass a lonely gloomy day again. In one word, my dear Miss Mary, are you willing to become Madame the Baroness De Botardière?"

"Sir, before replying to a question so flattering and so honorable to me——"

"Mademoiselle, the honor is the other way."

"I would wish to know if your loneliness is really as tiresome as you say it is?"

"My dear Miss Mary, I give you my word of honor I am so tired of it that I am dying by inches every day. I'm sure I could not have held out six months longer. It was all selfishness and stubbornness that prevented me from telling you the whole truth in our first conversation."

"Dear sir, reflect on the meaning of your words. I should be quite disappointed if they were not sincere."

"As true as my name is Joseph Edward, I was running down as fast as an hour glass. Oh! if you only knew what it is at my age to be abandoned to the mercy of servants as stupid as that deaf old Ambrose, who left me just now locked up in a room and in danger of bursting a blood-vessel any moment in shouting to him!"

"Oh! that is an inconvenience easily remedied, sir, and I am still afraid you have not sufficiently reflected on your resolution."

"My dear Miss Mary, I swear——"

"Excuse me a moment, sir; you speak of having my family here, and of the happiness you should find in their company?"

"Certainly, it is my only desire, it is the dream of my life!"

"However, you have a family of your own already, and you have not seen them for two years. How do you think I can believe——"

"My dear Miss Mary! I can show you by one word that I can still appreciate exceedingly the strength of the family sentiment."

"Let us have this proof, sir."

"You know what just reasons I have for being angry with my family?"

"No, sir, I don't know any just reasons at all."

"Well, no matter. In spite of those reasons which, right or wrong, I had for being angry with my nephew, I have been hundreds of times on the point of forgiving him: yes, and of going and saying to him, 'Let us live in friendship as in the old time!' Nothing but false shame ever kept me back."

"I yield, sir, to the tone of sincerity in your voice. Yes, sir, I believe you. So, then, your earnest wish is to pass your life henceforward in the midst of a family filled with love and respect for you?"

"Yes, with a young and charming lady like you, my dear Miss Mary, who is like you, full of goodness, talents, and accomplishments."

"Even admitting that the portrait is not too much flattered, sir, I think your desire quite realizable."

"Ah, my dear Miss Mary——"

"Only one word more, sir. It is a very deilcate subject, and you know my sincerity——"

"I do know it, I admire it, I adore it, my dear Ma——"

"You have not told me your age?"

"Sixty."

"I am twenty-four."

"Undoubtedly, the difference is a great one."

"Very great, sir. So I should deceive you strangely, but anyway you would not believe me, if I told you that a woman of my age could feel love——"

"For an old man of mine? What, my dear Miss Mary, do you think me foolish enough, ridiculous enough, to entertain such an idea! No, no, in return for the paternal affection I offer you, I shall expect in return only that of a daughter."

"Very good, sir. So, to resume: if I understand you right, your sole desire is to enjoy the dear joys of domestic life in the company of a young and charming lady, full of grace, talents, knowledge, goodness, and who would entertain for you all the tenderness, all the regards of a daughter for her beloved father?"

"Yes, yes, my dear Mary! That is my sole desire, that is my only dream!" exclaimed M. De Botardière with rapture, and getting ready to throw himself at Miss Mary's feet.—But just in time to prevent this gallant genuflexion, she took him by the hand, and, while leading him back towards the parlor, whither he followed her mechanically, though a little surprised, she said to him in touching accents, as they advanced along the passage:

"Sir, nobody shall ever know, but I will never forget, the honorable offer you have just made me. Unfortunately, I cannot accept it, for I have been three years engaged to a man whom I tenderly love and whom I expect soon to marry. But you are going to find in your own house a family only too happy to surround you with its affection and respect, and a young lady full of grace, talents and goodness, who only asks permission to love you as a father."

Saying these words, which stupified and bewildered the old gentleman, she suddenly opened the parlor door, exclaiming:—

"Alphonsine! Gérard! come and embrace your dear uncle."

She had scarcely pronounced the words, when the two young people jumped on the old gentleman's neck, warmly hugging him and kissing him so as almost to take his breath away,—an operation in which they were immediately joined by Monsieur and Madame De Morville.

The sight of his family, that he little expected to find assembled in his parlor, gave the old gentleman the finishing blow. Miss Mary's refusal had hurt him severely, and before he could recover from its effect, he had been squeezed and hugged and almost smothered at least a dozen times by Alphonsine, Gérard, and their parents, who, deeply and sincerely touched, uttered with tears of joy:

"Oh! the dear good uncle! restored to us once more!"

However cranky, crotchety, crusty, grumpy, and surly the old gentleman was by nature, he found it impossible to resist these testimonies of sincere affec-

tion, particularly as he was now disposed to emotion in consequence of Miss Mary's unceremonious refusal. For that vexation he now found a welcome consolation in the affectionate eagerness of his family; so, in spite of himself, his eyes filled with tears, and pressing Alphonsine and Gérard to his breast, he said to the governess in tones of melancholy reproach:

"Ah! Miss Mary, Miss Mary, is this——"

"Haven't I kept my promise?" interrupted the governess, with a sweet smile. "Are you not in the midst of a family that dotes on you? Do you not press to your heart a charming young lady that loves you like a father?"

"Well!" said the old gentleman, presenting his hand to his nephew, "all is forgotten. Now won't you all try and love me a little, in spite of my growling and scolding?"

"We will all love you dearly, uncle," said Madame De Morville, "on the strict condition that you give us a very good scolding."

"Oh! then it's all right," said the old gentleman. "Now I am sure of keeping your affection. Hello!" he cried, seeing De Favrolle advance, presented by M. De Morville, "who's this again? My persecutor of Calais!"

"Monsieur Théodore De Favrolle, our future son-in-law, dear uncle."

"As I'm one of the family now, sir," said Théodore, with a respectful bow, "I insist on coming in for my share of the scolding. I only hope I can thus atone for that unfortunate journey, sir, during which, I'm very much afraid, I was unhappy enough to displease you only too often."

"Very well, Mr. Slyboots, very well indeed. I shall not forget you when there's anything of the kind going on. However, I may pardon you altogether on one condition, and that is, at the wedding, that we shall have plenty of turkeys and chickens *à la Botardière*, as those graceless scamps used to say. Hey! Miss Mary, you remember the vagabonds, don't you!" added the old gentleman, turning to the governess, who now advanced towards him, holding Major O'Reilly's hand.

"Another, by Jove!" he exclaimed. "Why it's a regular monster meeting we have in my parlor to-day!"

"Yes, sir," said Miss Mary smiling, "a monster meeting it is, for it has done a monstrous deal of good and made everybody monstrously happy. Now, sir, permit me to introduce to you Major Henry O'Reilly, my affianced, who has been sent here by my father to take me back to Ireland."

The Major gave the old gentleman a deep, respectful bow. M. De Botardière returned it, but his features grew sad, and he said, with a sigh:—

"Ah, sir, you're a happy man: you'll have a worthy wife! However, I wish you joy! I wish you joy!"

Miss Mary gave Alphonsine a little sign, which she at once understood. Taking the old gentleman's hand, she said:—

"My good uncle, we shall often talk of Miss Mary. And what is to prevent herself and her family from spending many a pleasant summer with us here in our dear beautiful Touraine?"

"I see nothing to prevent it indeed," said the old

man, embracing his niece affectionately; "and when she comes we cannot do too much to welcome her; for, taking everything into consideration, niece, *you* are not the only one of us that Miss Mary has given a valuable lesson to."

"Ah! dear uncle, your words are much truer than you think, perhaps!" exclaimed Madame De Morville, with a glance at Miss Mary which seemed at once to ask her pardon and to express the deepest gratitude. "We will be always happy to see Miss Mary, and in her absence we shall never forget her!"

* * * * * * * * *

After an affectionate leave-taking, Monsieur and Madame De Morville, their children, M. De Favrolle, and M. De Botardière, standing on the steps before the hall door, followed with tearful eyes a travelling carriage rapidly departing down the avenue, with honest John Welsh on the box seat. At the turn of the road they caught a momentary glimpse of Miss Mary leaning out of the window and waving her handkerchief as the last signal of adieu.

Then the unexpected guests of M. De Botardière returned with him into the château.

* * * * * * * * *

About three months after, there was a brilliant assemblage of rank and fashion in the Church of the Conception, Marlborough street, Dublin, Auguste De Morville, Esq., French Consul, among the number, all being the pleased spectators of the marriage of the gallant Major O'Reilly, Forty-second Regiment, with Mary, the beautiful and accomplished

daughter of Squire O'Connor, Clara Cottage, county Kilkenny. After the nuptial benediction had been pronounced by Archbishop Murray, the friends of both families crowded around the book to sign their names. Two ladies of foreign appearance, attended by three gentlemen, disengaged themselves from the throng, and making their way to the register, wrote their names in their turn.

The eldest lady wrote:—

"Louise De Morville."

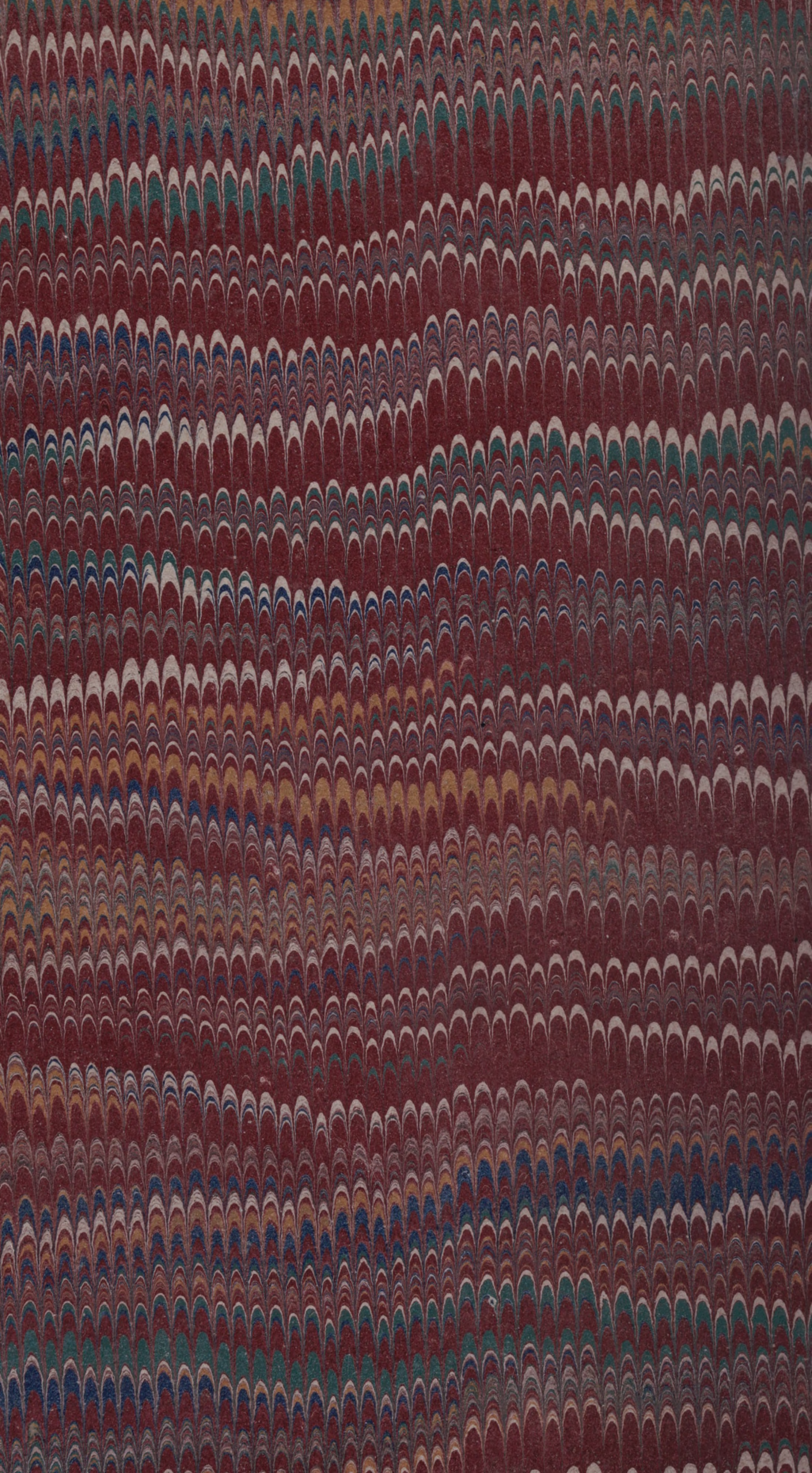
The other:—

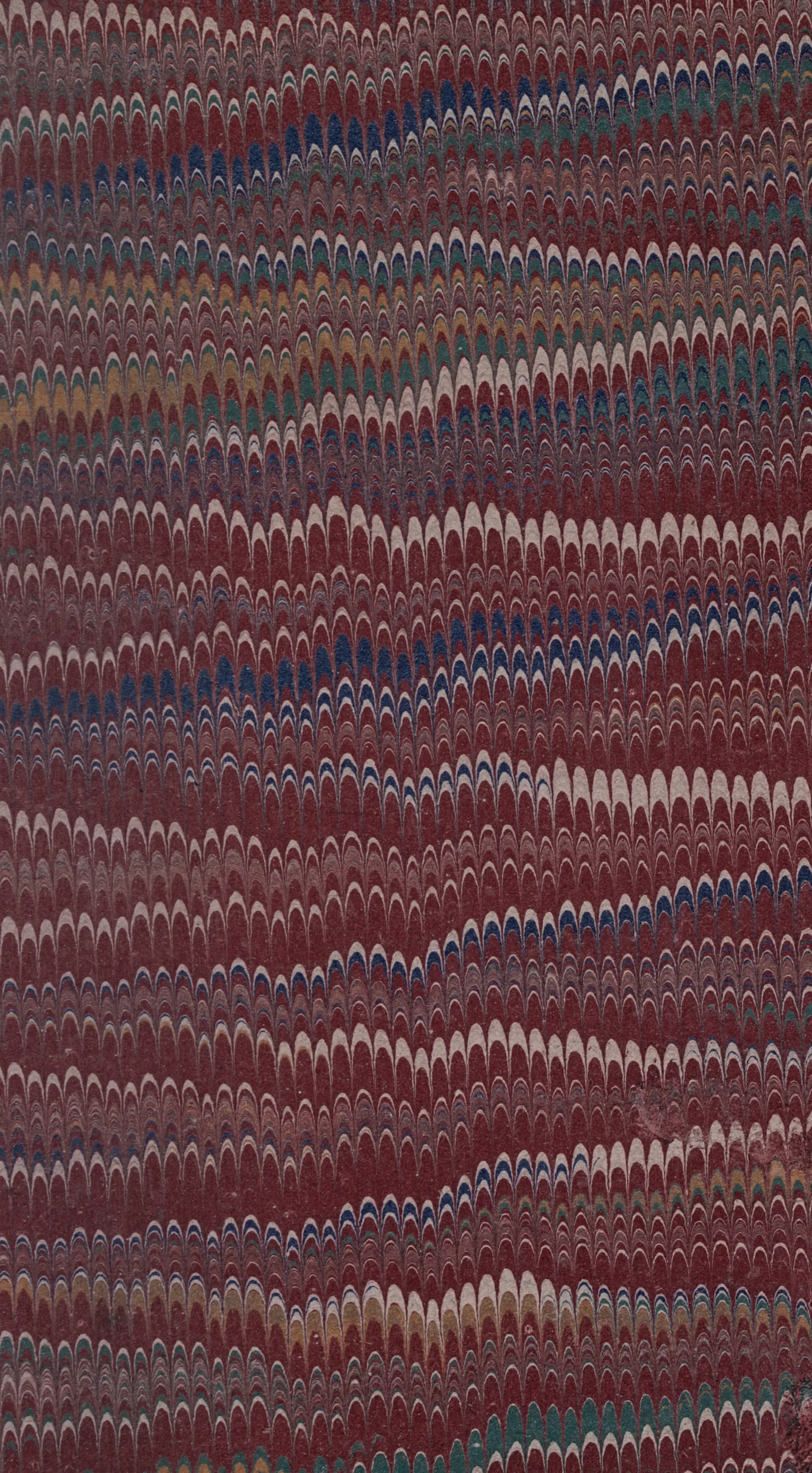
"Alphonsine De Favrolle."

Major O'Reilly pointed out the names to his wife, who was so much besieged by well wishers that she had remarked nothing, and then hastened himself most cordially to greet the three gentlemen. The young wife uttered a cry of joy, embraced Madame De Morville heartily, and pressed her dear old pupil tenderly in her arms

"You did not expect to see us here to-day, did you?" whispered Alphonsine, smiling.—"But we are on our bridal trip, you see, and of all foreign lands what more interesting to visit than the *fair hills of holy Ireland*, and *of all* possible sights there, what could be more delightful to behold than the ceremony that secures the happiness of my dear, dear little Miss Mary? Besides, I wanted to tell you how happy you have made us at Morville once more—father and mother, Gérard, Théodore, uncle and all! May the dear good God bless you forever!"

THE END.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00014649396